

THE EASTERN ANTHROPOLOGIST

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STATUS DIFFERENCES IN A HIGH HINDU CASTE OF NEPAL¹

CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

The upper stratum of present-day Nepal society is formed by Upadiya Brahmans, Kumai Brahmans, and Jaisi Brahmans, as well as the two Kshatriya castes of Thakuris and Chetris. The former has given Nepal the royal house of Saha, while a Chetri lineage known as Rana furnished throughout the century preceding the revolution of 1951 the hereditary prime-ministers who were the effective rulers of Nepal. Together with the Thakuris, they are the architects of the State of Nepal in its modern shape, even though their contribution to the civilization of the country never approached that of the Newars, who had ruled and developed the Nepal Valley until the so-called Gurkha conquest in 1769. This event placed Thakuris and Chetris at the helm of government, but whereas the Newars were and still are basically an urban people, the Chetris never completely outgrew their rural roots, which lay in the hills round Gurkha, and many of them lived all through the Rana period within the orbit of the urban civilization of the valley without being of it.

In the present paper I propose to analyse the internal structure of the Chetri caste. This differs from many of the higher castes of India owing to the absence of any tendency to split into status-determined sub-divisions. Among the Chetris there is no general horizontal division into endogamous sub-castes, and the entire Chetri community forms ideally a homogeneous, endogamous ethnic group conscious of its identity despite its dispersal over the greater part of Nepal. Such status differentials as do occur among Chetris, do not involve entities comparable to sub-castes, or even individual clans or lineages, but they relate to primary and extended families, which move *within* the clans and lineage up and down a sliding scale of social status.

¹The field-work on which this article is based was greatly facilitated by a generous grant from the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

The principal named divisions of the Chettri caste are the *thar* or clans. Many of the Chettri clans now found in the Nepal Valley and its vicinity, occur also in historical records, and it would seem that in this area at least their number has remained fairly constant ever since the Gurkha conquest. I am not in a position to say whether different clans are found in the westernmost districts of Nepal, but the clans occurring in the districts of Gurkha and Pokhra, as well as those I encountered on journeys in Eastern Nepal, are the same as the clans found in the Valley. There is no tradition regarding any definite number of Chettri clans, and I have never met a Chettri who professed to know the names of all the *thar* occurring in his caste.

Yet the number of clans found in the Valley and the areas I visited is limited to those in the following list :

Kunwar, including the lineage now known as Rana.

Pande

Thapa

Basnet

Bista

Adhikari

Baniya

Bhandari

Bohra

Budathoki

Boguti

Gharti

Karki

Khadka

Mahat

Raj Majhi.

Each of these clans is sub-divided into a number of lineages designated by terms many of which suggest territorial associations, although today these lineages are not confined to specific geographic areas. The *thar* bearing the name *Bista*, for instance, consists of three lineages, referred to as Kalikote Bista, Puar Bista and Gharti Bista. Each of these lineages is a strictly exogamous unit, but although statistically there seems to be a disinclination against marriages between the various lineages of a clan, such unions are not prohibited and several cases occur in the genealogies and house-lists I recorded.

Exogamous units larger than an individual lineage, on the other hand, are formed by clusters of identically named lineages of different

The exogamous character of the clusters of identically named lineages seems to be weakening in recent days, and I heard of a marriage between a Kalikote Mahat of Patan and a Kalikote Bista girl of Machegaon. My informants admitted the irregularity of such a union, but pointed out that now-a-days even Brahmans had begun to marry within the same *gotra*.

clans. Besides the Kalikote lineage of the Bista clan, for instance, there exist also a Kalikote lineage of the Mahat clan, and the members of these two units refer to each other as *swange bhai* and standing in this 'brother'-relationship they are barred from intermarriage. The term *swange*, indicating in this context a cluster of identically named lineages, does not seem to be used by itself as a term comparable to *thar*, and whereas a man may be asked for his *thar* he will not be asked for his *swange*.

Independent of the system of clans and lineage-clusters is the association of the individual lineages with specific *gotra*. Different lineages of one clan may have different *gotra*, or two or three lineages may have the same *gotra* while a fourth lineage has a different *gotra*.

Similarly, lineages of two clans which are regarded as *swange bhai* may have different *gotra*. Thus the *gotra* of the Puar Bista lineage is Kapila whereas the *gotra* of the Puar Thapa is Atrya. Conversely, the same *gotra* may be associated with groups unconnected by ties of clan or lineage-cluster. Thus Maudgalya is the *gotra* of the Kalikote Thapa lineage as well as of the Karki Mudula lineage.

Summarizing this complex structure we find that every Chetri belongs by birth to the following four units :

1. The clan (*thar*), from which he derives his surname (e.g. Bista or Thapa) used in documents.
2. The named lineage of this clan (e.g. Kalikote Bista), which is the basic exogamous unit.
3. A cluster of identically named lineages, whose members regard each other as *swange bhai* and normally do not intermarry.
4. The *gotra*.

Neither the *thar* nor the clusters of identically named lineages (i.e. Kalikote Bista and Kalikote Thapa), are unilineal descent groups in the narrow sense of the term. All members of the Bista clan, no doubt, consider each other as linked in an undefined way, but the fact that those who are of different lineage are not debarred from intermarriage excludes a fiction of patrilineal descent from a common ancestor. Similarly, the members of a cluster of identically named lineages, such as Kalikote Bista and Kalikote Thapa, though as *swange bhai* included in the same exogamous unit, have no tradition of common descent. *Gotra* affiliation, on the other hand, exceeds not only clan limits, but also caste limits, and many Chetri lineages have the same *gotra* as certain Brahman clans.

The Chetri possesses no terminology to describe detailed gradation in social and ritual status. Ideally all members of Chetri clans are equal, and the lower status of the offspring of irregular unions is considered as a deviation from the norm rather than as a definite grade in a ranking system. Chetris refer to the fully privileged members of a clan as *jharra*, meaning 'proper, pure', and to those not

accorded this status as not being *jharra*, without using any positive attribute to indicate their inferior status.

The difference between *jharra* and non-*jharra* status cannot be defined in absolute terms. Whether an irregularity in the marriage of a person's parents will debar him from commensality depends largely on the attitude of his closest kinsmen, who may ignore such irregularity and accept him as one of them. There are, of course, certain situations which will compel even the most accommodating of kinsmen to treat a member of their lineage as non-*jharra*. Thus the son or daughter of a Chetri and a Tamang or Gurung mother cannot by any device be granted commensal rights without endangering the *jharra* status of the accepting group.

There is, on the other hand, no constant correlation between *jharra* status, which is basically ritual in character, and the economic and social status enjoyed by an individual or a family. In the villages in the Nepal Valley, for instance, there are many middle-class families of substance and political influence which are not considered *jharra* whereas the majority of the poorer peasant class families enjoy *jharra* status. On a few ritual occasions, such as the annual sacrificial rites in honour of the clan-deity, these *jharra* families have precedence over their richer non-*jharra* neighbours, but in daily village life the distinction is hardly noticeable. In a village near Bisanku, for instance, I found that among 90 Chetri and Khatri households, 54 were considered *jharra* and 36 non-*jharra*. The 10 wealthiest families, many of whose members were holding or had in the past held high positions in the Nepal army, were all of non-*jharra* status, whereas most of the ordinary cultivators were *jharra*.

Owing to their influential position many middle-class non-*jharra* landowners and officials were able to obtain for their sons *jharra*-brides. Most of these girls came not from the neighbourhood but from Chetri villages in the hills, some of them situated at a distance of several days' journey from the Valley. The daughters of these middle-families, however, were married to men of the Valley or even of Kathmandu. The parents' urge to find *jharra* husbands for their daughters does not seem to be as great as their desire to obtain *jharra* wives for their sons. For in the case of a girl great stress is placed on the necessity of finding a husband capable of offering her the kind of life to which she was accustomed at home, and rather than marrying their daughter to a poor man of *jharra* status, a wealthy family will marry their daughter to a non-*jharra* man of means. Non-*jharra* middle-class men endeavour to find *jharra* brides, because of the possibility of gradually raising a family's ritual status by alliance with *jharra* families. There is no definite rule that the children of a non-*jharra* man and a *jharra* mother will be considered as *jharra*, but a man's chance of being admitted to *jharra* status improves considerably

if he can point out that both his grandfather and his father have married *jharra* girls. With the passage of time the circumstances of a misalliance which originally caused a drop in status may be forgotten, and marriages with families of unimpeachable status may be invoked as evidence of a family's claim to rank as *jharra*.

The argument underlying such a claim is obviously more or less circular. On the assumption that unions between *jharra* and non-*jharra* persons are rare and undesirable, it is hypocritically argued that *jharra* brides would not have been married into a family which did not qualify for *jharra* status; but that as demonstrably such *jharra* girls were married by men of the family, it must enjoy *jharra* status.

There could be little mobility between the status of *jharra* and non-*jharra* if a person's position within the system was a matter of general concern and thus widely known. But as occasions when status differences of this kind become apparent arise mainly from social and ritual interaction of close kin, the circle of those actively conscious of a man's status may be small. There is a term, *bhatthar*, for all those 'who eat rice together', and this is applied to both real and classificatory brothers (*dāju-bhai*), wife's kin (*sasurali*) and kinsmen on the mother's side (*mamali*). This term is as a rule used only by *jharra* people, who have no hesitation in describing their kinsmen by a term implying ritual interdining. Non-*jharra* Chetries, on the other hand, who are always on the look-out for opportunities to rise in the social scale, do not like to refer to their non-*jharra* relatives as *bhatthar*, as this would emphasize their common ritual status with other non-*jharra* persons.

The discrimination of *jharra* Chetris against kinsmen of non-*jharra* status expresses itself principally in the following ways:

1. Refusal to accept ritually relevant food, i.e. rice, cooked by them or in their kitchen.
2. Reduction of the period of pollution observed after a kinsman's death from 13 days in the case of a *jharra* kinsman to 5 days in the case of a non-*jharra* person.
3. Exclusion of the non-*jharra* members of the lineage from the inner enclosure of the shrine of the lineage-deity.

There is, moreover, a distinction between those entitled to wear a sixfold sacred thread (*janai*) and those invested with a *janai* of only three threads. This distinction does not entirely coincide with the differentiation between *jharra* and non-*jharra*. Whereas all Chetris of *jharra* status wear a sixfold *janai*, there are some non-*jharra* families whose members are customarily entitled to sixfold sacred threads, while the men of other non-*jharra* families wear only a threefold *janai*. The decision whether to invest a boy with the one or other type of *janai* lies ultimately with the family's Brahman *purohit*. This

family priest will normally refuse to invest a Chettri's son from a Gurung or Tamang wife with a sixfold sacred thread, but he may agree to do so in the case of the offspring of a Chettri's unsanctioned union with a Chettri widow or divorcée.

Whereas among peasant- and middle-class families, status distinctions have always been fluid, they tended to become highly systematized among the members of the politically dominant Rana family. In the case of Rana men *jharra* status involved not only the right to interdine with other kinsmen of unimpeachable ancestry, but also a place in the line of succession to the prime ministership and other high offices. The familiar classification of Ranas as A class, B class and C class Ranas is nothing else but the systematization of status-distinctions within a lineage. It was first formulated by foreign observers, but soon gained wide currency. Initially all children from marriages of *jharra* Ranas, with *jharra* girls of any Chettri clan were considered A class, those from unions with Chettri widows or divorcées B class, and the children of Rana men and lower caste women as C class. But to restrict the number of men in the line of succession to the prime ministership, the leading members of the Rana family introduced the rule that only the sons of A class Ranas from wives belonging to the royal clan of Saha should be reckoned as A class, whereas the offspring from perfectly legitimate unions with girls of Chettri clans should not be placed on the roll of succession and not be considered A class. Political considerations and specifically the desire to keep the circle of ruling families as small as possible, has here led to the introduction of a criterion not inherent in the idea of *jharra* status. By normal standards many Ranas now described as C class, have every claim to *jharra* status, and it is not unlikely that with the end of Rana rule the artificial distinction between A and B class Ranas will become meaningless and there will remain only the distinction between those of pure Chettri ancestry on the one side and the issue of Rana men and wives of lower caste on the other.

A detailed discussion of the Chettri family system would exceed the framework of this essay, but a statement of its main features is necessary for an understanding of the status differentials in present-day Chettri society.

The Chettri family is traditionally virilocal and patriarchal. It consists of a man and his wife or wives, their unmarried children, and in many cases also their married sons and the latter's wives and children. All those living under the same roof as well as married sons inhabiting a separate building but remaining co-owners of the joint-estate, are subject to the father's authority and expected to place their earnings at his disposal. In return they are entitled to maintenance and their legitimate needs are met out of the family's common purse. Large joint families are now-a-days rarer than they were even a generation

ago. Among peasant class Chetris married sons often separate from their fathers' household once they have children of their own, but among middle-class people there is a strong tendency to keep the family undivided until after the father's death, when the sons usually divide the property, only one remaining with the mother in the parental house. Joint-families headed by an eldest brother are exceedingly rare once the younger brothers are married.

Whereas daughters leave the parental home after marriage, and count henceforth as members of their husband's family and lineage, ritual relations with their natal family are transformed but by no means broken. The ties which henceforth link them and their children with their parents and particularly their brothers are based on the concept of *pujya*, and it is this essential concept which provides the *rationale* for much of the relations between affines.

A girl is considered *pujya* or 'worshipable' to her own father, to her brothers, to her mother and to her elder sisters. This 'sacredness' of a girl is expressed in the custom that during the wedding her own parents, brothers and elder sisters wash her feet and that ever after they give ritual gifts (*dakshina*) of the type given to Brahmans for the sake of acquiring merit. This relation is a unilateral one. The daughter or sister is always the recipient, the father or brother always the giver. Whereas sons inherit a share in their father's property, the daughters are not only entitled to a dowry but also to a never-ending series of gifts from their parents and their brothers, a right which in the long run may amount to as much as a share in the parental estate. The quality of being *pujya* which a woman possesses in relation to her parental family, is transmitted to her children and to a lesser degree to the husband. The custom which compels a man always to offer hospitality to his sister's husband, but to refrain as far as possible from accepting food or anything of value in the latter's house, is the logical sequence of this attitude of reverence towards a sister and her husband. Both are to be 'worshipped', to be given food and offerings, in the same way as a Brahman receives gifts but never reciprocates. The only exception to this rule is the annual festival of Tihar, when the sisters bless their brothers by placing a *tika*-mark on their foreheads and give them presents of flowers and food. But even at that time the brothers must give them *dakshina* in excess of the value of the sisters' presents.

The obligations resulting from a man's *pujya* relationship to his sisters pass on to his son, who is expected to offer hospitality and gifts, not only to his own sisters, but after his father's death even to any of his father's sisters who come to his house and claim their dues.

Independent of the relationship of respect and *pujya* is the relationship of interdining which is the formal recognition of equal ritual status. One might expect that anyone would eat food cooked by

his sister whom he treats as *pujya*, or that any drop in her social status would also affect her 'sacredness'. This, however, is not so. A *jharra* girl married to a man of non-*jharra* status remains *pujya* to her brothers, and continues to receive from them *dakshina*-gifts and *tika*, but her brothers may not accept rice cooked in her house, and when she visits the parental home she will not be allowed to help in the cooking. The relationship inherent in a sister's *pujya* position appears thus as independent of her status as member of the commensal group. The Chetris refer to the latter as *bansha* or kitchen-status, because only those of equal ritual purity may participate in the cooking or have their meals in the inner part of the *bansha*, the space set aside for cooking and eating, which, in Chetri eyes, is of great sacredness and ritual importance.

The separation of the concepts of *pujya* and commensality permits the maintenance of ritual relations between a man and his sister and her children in the face of status differences created by marriage. The present-day Chetri society of the Nepal Valley is a spectrum of status groups, one merging into the other, with kinship ties running across the dividing lines. This situation has been created mainly by marriages between partners of unequal status, and we must briefly consider the marriage-system to understand how such unions come about.

The Chetris, like other high-caste Hindus, do not approve of divorce but in practice a good many marriages concluded with full rites break up after a number of years. A wife unable to adjust herself to her husband or his parents, may either return to her natal home and refuse to rejoin her husband, or she may go and live with another man in an unsanctioned union. If she takes the former course, her parents may ultimately be embarrassed by having to give shelter to a young woman separated from her husband, and if there is also a daughter-in-law in the house relations between daughter and daughter-in-law are likely to become difficult. If, on the other hand, she enters an informal union with another man, her husband may follow one of three courses: he may report the case to the police and this may result in both the wife and her lover being sentenced to a term of imprisonment for adultery, or he may divorce his wife, formally, disclaim any further obligation to maintain her and demand compensation for his marriage expenses; or finally, he may ignore her association with another man and leave the possibility of a report to the police as a threat over the couple's head. Many husbands take the latter course, mainly in order to avoid the scandal attached to a court case, and in such a case the wife and the man she lives with usually keep well out of the husband's way and if possible settle in some distant place.

The number of women who have left their husbands and live to all intents and purposes as the wives of other men is considerable, and among peasant-class Chetris young widows usually also enter a second union. A minor ceremony, known as the "changing of clothes" (*luga pheraune*) legalizes their position. The new husband presents to the woman a set of clothes and she takes off the clothes of her widowhood and dresses in the new clothes. No Brahman is required for this rite.

A divorcée or widow can never attain the full status of a *byaite* wife, as those married with full rites are called, but will always be regarded as a *lyaite* wife. If she was *jharra* by birth and her second husband is also *jharra* she may retain her high ritual status, but if the circumstances of her divorce were discreditable the husband's kinsmen may refuse to grant her commensal status, and in that case she will automatically be regarded as non-*jharra*.

A problem different from that of the marriages of Chetri divorcés and widows, is that of the unions between Chetri or Khatri men and women of other castes. Though contrary to the generally accepted ideal of caste endogamy, such unions are not infrequent, and there are few Chetri villages in which there are no instances of inter-caste alliances. Only Upadhiya and Kumai Brahman and untouchable women are excluded from the range of potential spouses; Brahman women, because the laws of Nepal forbid men of lower status to have sexual relations with women of the higher Brahman castes, and untouchables because any men living with an untouchable wife would automatically be treated as untouchable.

Newar, Gurung, Magar, Tamang and Sherpa women, on the other hand, are eligible to share the bed even if not the kitchen of a Chetri. Numerous are the cases of Chetris of the most exalted status, not excluding Rana prime ministers, living with women of these ethnic groups, and in many of a non-*jharra* Chetri and in most C class Ranas there flows the blood of Newar¹ or Tamang mothers, grandmothers or great-grandmothers. It would seem that such mixed unions are more frequent among the wealthier families where non-Chetri servants are employed and men can afford to maintain more than one wife, than among the less affluent peasant-class families. In a Chetri village south of Patan with a large proportion of middle-class families I counted among 92 Chetri households six inter-caste unions, involving two Newar, one Magar, one Gharti and two Gurung women, whereas among an equal number of peasant families in a nearby but less prosperous settlement lying beyond the first range of foothills, there were

¹ Although the Newar community is sub-divided into numerous castes of differential status, Chetris consider all Newars as inferior to themselves, and do not show any marked preference for women of the higher Newar castes. They avoid, however, all contact with untouchable Newars.

only two Chetri men who lived with women of other castes, one being a Magar and one a Sanyasi girl.

Unions between Chetris and non-Chetris of lower castes are almost exclusively hypergamous, *i.e.*, Chetri men take Newar, Gurung or Tamang wives. No social recognition on the part of the Chetris, on the other hand, is given to the union between a Chetri girl and a man of any of these communities. Such a union is incapable of being regularized in the eyes of Chetris and its occurrence leaves a serious stain on the family's reputation.

In unions of persons of different status *within* the Chetri community, on the other hand, the opposite principle prevails. For it is more usual for *jharra* girls to marry non-*jharra* men than for *jharra* men to seek alliances with non-*jharra* brides. The tendency is thus one of hypogamy rather than hypergamy, and the Chetris explain this by pointing out that the introduction of a daughter-in-law of lower status would create difficulties with the household arrangements; for being debarred from cooking for the family she could not take her traditional place as a help to her mother-in-law. There is, moreover, the danger that her status as a non-*jharra* may affect the status of her sons and hence that of the whole family in the next generation¹. The *jharra* girl married to a non-*jharra* man, on the other hand, is easily absorbed into his household, and her natal family is not materially affected by the lowering of her status. For according to the rules of the *pujya* relationship it is she and her children who are entitled to hospitality in her parental home, while neither her parents nor her brothers are expected to visit her house on any formal occasion, and seldom accept even ordinary hospitality. As persons of lower status can eat in the houses of those higher than they, but not vice-versa, a daughter who has married below her status (but within the Chetri caste) can maintain normal relations with her natal family, while a daughter-in-law of lower status can never play a normal role in her conjugal home.

It could be argued that the same considerations might apply also to inter-caste unions, but there the position is reversed. Chetri girls are freely given in marriage to Brahmans, but never to men of castes or ethnic groups lower than Chetris. The explanation lies probably in the fact that conclusion of a sexual union unsanctioned by religious rites is more damaging to the reputation of a women than to that

¹ A similar attitude to hypogamous marriages has been found among certain Hindu castes of Garhwal. In an unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Ram Prakash Srivastava writes: "The Garhwali Hindus felt that if girls went out to lower castes, it would not affect the purity of the family, but if one took in a woman of a lower caste as wife his purity would be destroyed and his children would suffer social degradation". (*The Bhotia. A study of the Cultural Pattern of a Community on the U.P.-Tibetan Border*. University of Saugar, 1958).

of a man. The lower caste spouses of Chetri men are mainly subsidiary wives taken in addition to a principal wife of equal status. But a woman cannot marry subsidiary husbands, and by entering into a union with a non-Chetri of inferior caste, she cuts herself off from the Chetri community and foregoes the possibility of any future marriage within her own caste.

One might think that the preference for *jharra* brides evinced by many of the wealthy non-*jharra* men of the Valley coupled with the frequency of marriages between Chetri-girls (mainly also of *jharra* status) and Brahman men would create a shortage of *jharra* girls. In practice no such difficulties seem to have arisen, for many of the girls whom non-*jharra* men of the Valley villages seek as brides are drawn from a large area in the hills, where the outflow of marriageable women is balanced by the absence of many of the younger men on military service and perhaps also by the incidence of intercaste unions involving Gurung, Magar or Tamang women.

Chetri society differs from that of most high Hindu castes in India by its disinclination to allow differentials in the ritual and social status of individuals to cause a division of the caste into endogamous groups of unequal status. Despite the distinction between *jharra* and non-*jharra* families, the Chetri caste as such has remained united, and there is no indication of any development in the direction of the growth of an inferior sub-caste. Neither the solidarity of the caste nor that of any particular clan or lineage depends on the ritual equality of all its members. The sons born of unorthodox alliances are members of their father's clan; they have the right to participate in the communal worship of the lineage deity, and are Chetris in sentiment even if only partly of Chetri blood. When the Chetris expanded into areas inhabited by populations of Mongoloid racial stock and Tibeto-Burman language, it was due to this principle that intermarriage with local women did not result in a sapping of Chetri strength. Even among the Chetris dwelling in the high regions of Western Nepal, who seem to have absorbed a great deal of local Mongoloid blood, we encounter clan-names identical to those of the Gurkha area and the Kathmandu valley, and simple hill farmers identify themselves with the Chetri class which dominated Nepal throughout the Rana period. Whether *jharra* or non-*jharra*, every Chetri is conscious of the supreme power which men of his caste wielded at that time over the whole of Nepal, and this consciousness gives him confidence in his dealings with people of other ethnic groups. The loyalty of Chetris, both of pure and of mixed ancestry, was one of the pillars of the Rana régime, and their support was all the more solid as unlike many Indian castes the Chetri community escaped the fate of splitting up into numerous sub-castes of disparate status.

A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WITCH BELIEFS IN A MYSORE VILLAGE

SCARLETT EPSTEIN

The operation of witch beliefs in African societies has been amply recorded by anthropologists. By contrast the lack of reference to witch beliefs in anthropological accounts of present-day Hindu societies is most striking. Yet there is ample evidence of the existence of witch beliefs in traditional Hindu societies.¹ Unfortunately, none of the cases quoted in the ethnographic literature provides us with sufficient information to analyse the social relations involved between the victim and the accused. For instance, O'Malley reports the case of "one Kari, a man of a very low caste in the Saran district of Bihar, who was troubled by an evil spirit, and on consulting an exorcist, learnt that it had been sent by a neighbour called Gokhul. Kari made haste to come to terms with his enemy and an agreement was drawn up in which Gokhul undertook to recall the evil spirit and never let it trouble Kari again. Should it do so, Gokhul promised to pay a penalty of Rs. 25. The agreement was carefully recorded on a formal document with the signatures of witnesses. Kari, however, found that he was still vexed by the evil spirit and accordingly brought a case against Gokhul charging him with cheating."²

In order to make a sociological analysis of this case we would need to know the relationship between Kari and Gokhul, the knowledge that the exorcist had of it and the constitution of the court to whom Kari put his case against Gokhul. When Kari approached the exorcist to find out whose evil spirit was bewitching him, the latter obviously produced an answer which was acceptable to him. The exorcist may have arrived at the accusation against Gokhul in the same manner as "a Cewa diviner is able to arrive at an acceptable answer by (a) being a keen student of local friendships, animosities and kinship ties; (b) insisting on an interval between the opening of a case and the actual consultations or seance; (c) requiring that the client should be accompanied by a relative or close acquaintance; and (d) skilfully drawing the client into arguments he has with his divining apparatus."³ Judging from the literature on witchcraft accusations in Hindu societies it appears that here, too, an exorcist names the witch responsible only if he is well acquainted with the social relationship between the victim and the person he accuses of witchcraft. If he is an outsider he usually points only to a category of people among whom the witch may be found as, for instance, that the witch is a woman living in the same village as the victim. This leaves the actual choice of the accused to the victim, and thereby narrows down the circle of

people from among whom the witch will be chosen to persons with whom the victim has strained social relations.

The apparent contrast between the ample evidence of witch beliefs given in the ethnographic literature on traditional Hindu societies and the lack of it in anthropological accounts of modern Hindu societies raises the question whether witch beliefs have disappeared. In this paper I set out to show that witch beliefs are still flourishing in a Mysore village.⁴ Wangala⁵ is a multi-caste village composed of 192 households of which 67% belong to the peasant (Okkaliga) caste. Landholding is highly dispersed and no one household owns more than 15 acres of land. 89% of all the land owned by Wangala villagers belongs to Peasants. The numerical and economic dominance of Peasants in Wangnla accounts for my concentration on their social organisation and pattern of witch beliefs in this paper.

The village is situated about four miles south of Mandya. Its lands were irrigated in 1938 from a major canal irrigation scheme originating at a dam over the Kaveri river at Kanambadi about 25 miles south-west of Wangala. Prior to irrigation the village economy could be described as being largely subsistence. Sericulture provided the only major source of cash, but was not widely practised. Irrigation, accompanied by the establishment of a sugar factory in Mandya, enabled farmers to grow sugarcane as a cash crop: in this way the village became linked to the wider cash economy. Because the cultivation of sugarcane requires a lot of working capital only the richest peasant farmers could venture into cane-growing immediately after irrigation. Thus irrigation re-emphasised the economic predominance of the richest farmers. It was among the group of "middle-farmers" that irrigation created a struggle for status. Among this group new criteria of prestige developed. They vied with each other in arranging the most elaborate weddings for their sons. They also began to regard the sort of life a farmer provided for his wife as a matter of prestige. The more a man relieved his wife from work on his lands and the greater independence he allowed her, the higher his prestige, other things being equal. Some farmers went so far as to buy their wives a buffalo whose milk yield provided the latter with an independent source of income. Others again gave considerable money presents to their wives before they themselves died, to ensure the status of their wives even after their own death. This enabled some women to enter the money market by becoming lenders of small short-term loans. The interest on these loans is much higher than that charged by men on larger long-term loans. Women money lenders charge one anna per rupee per month, which amounts to an annual interest rate of 75%, while men charge only 12% interest per year. However, debtors usually borrow only a few rupees at a

time from a woman moneylender which they repay after a few months, whereas from men they borrow larger sums for many years. Indebtedness among Wangala Peasant men runs along traditionally established patron-client relations and debts are usually inherited like the other strands of social relations which link patrons and clients. By contrast, the lending of money by women to other women as well as to men created a new type of social relation which did not exist in the pre-irrigation subsistence economy. The fact that women have entered the field of struggle for economy status quite independently of their menfolk adds an element of tension to social relations. Men do not like the idea of getting indebted to a woman, but necessity often forces them to do so. Moneylending by women provides a fresh stimulus to situations which give rise to harbouring a grudge. I shall argue that the tensions created by women having become moneylenders are projected into witchcraft accusations because they can find no other medium of expression in Wangala's present-day social organization.

Wangala Peasants do not distinguish as clearly between witchcraft and sorcery as the Azande, who believe that "a witch performs no rite, utters no spell and possesses no medicines. They [the Azande] believe also that sorcerers, may do them ill by performing magic rites with bad medicines."⁶ On the contrary, Wangala Peasants believe that 'witches are women who administer poison to their victims, but cannot help doing so. Women who give poison cannot control the evil spirit within themselves that makes them poison other people.'⁷ In Wangala witches never profess to exercising witchcraft. They therefore differ from those described by Sir A. Lyall in a review of the Indian evidence. He defines a witch as "one who professes to work marvels, not through the aid and counsel of supernatural beings in whom he believes as much as the rest, but by certain occult faculties and devices which he conceives himself to possess."⁸

Wangala Peasants distinguish between poison (*maddu*) which will result in sickness and poison (*visha*) which will result in death. Wangala witches are believed to be "*maddu*-givers" only. 'If they do not attempt to poison somebody within a certain period of time such "*maddu*-givers" will have to die. Therefore, from time to time they have to poison somebody. If a witch invites a number of people for a meal and puts poison in the food for the whole lot but only wants one person to be poisoned the poison will go only to that person.' In most of the cases I recorded Wangala Peasants did not consult a diviner or oracle as to what witch had poisoned them. They simply stated it as a fact that they had been poisoned by a certain woman. For instance Kempamma⁹, a young Peasant woman accused Lingamma, an old widow who was her relative and neighbour, of having poisoned her. Kempamma had been feeling sick for several weeks and when she went to see a native doctor in another village, who gave her some

medicine which made her vomit, she was shown some small black pills, which were supposed to be the poison she had been given and which she had now vomited. Kempamma immediately remembered that she had a meal at Lingamma's shortly before she had become sick. So when Kempamma returned to Wangala and met Lingamma outside her own house she accused the latter of being the witch who had poisoned her and kicked the old lady to the ground. When Lingamma fell she hit her head against a stone and became unconscious. By this time a crowd of onlookers had gathered. The villagers had become accustomed to asking my medical aid whenever somebody was sick or had had an accident. On this occasion, however, when I wanted to apply a smelling bottle to Lingamma, they told me not to interfere but let the old widow lie. She was lying unconscious and did not seem to react to any efforts made by her sons to revive her. Some of the village elders tried to make the sons carry their mother, who was lying on the porch of Kempamma's hut, to their own house, but the sons insisted that they did not want her in their own home; if the old lady were to die she should die under the roof of her attacker. However, in spite of the sons' protests the village chairman ordered some men to carry Lingamma to her own home, where she was received by her daughters-in-law.

After Lingamma had been removed from the scene her younger son, Puttegowda, was wailing loudly, complaining that such misfortune should have befallen his mother who had always been an honest and forthright woman. Onlooking Peasants just sneered at his remarks and said that Lingamma was a witch. This infuriated Bhoomegowda, his elder brother, who threatened to take the case to Mandya court if anyone brought any witchcraft accusation against his mother. Bhoomegowda requested the village chairman to write a report of the whole incident so that he could take it to Mandya police. The chairman agreed to do so but at the same time requested the two parties to the dispute to settle their quarrel within the village and not to take it to the police. The elders agreed to hold a *panchayat* meeting the following morning to try and settle the dispute.

Although Kempamma, a young woman, had obviously attacked and caused bodily harm to Lingamma, an old widow, an action which they would normally condemn, Wangala Peasants all sympathised with Kempamma. I heard people whisper among themselves that Lingamma was an evil person, that she had attempted to poison other people already and therefore she well deserved the beating she had received from Kempamma. Kempamma's sister's husband came over to tell me that Lingamma had already tried to poison his own wife Chennamma about seven years ago, when she presented poison with betel leaves and nuts to Chennamma. However, the latter had fortunately detected the poison and it was shown to the village

panchayat. Lingamma was then called before the *panchayat*. When shown the poison she said in her defence that she had bought the betel leaves and nuts and had no idea how any poison came into them. Since no damage had been done the *panchayat* members decided to drop the case at the time, but all villagers well remembered the incident.

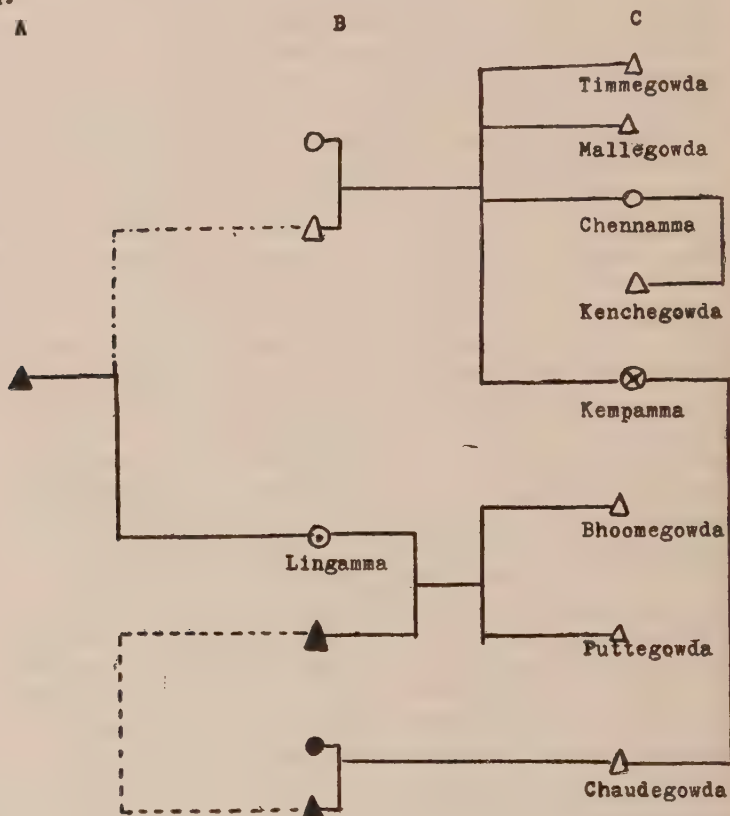
The following morning a *panchayat* meeting was held while Puttegowda loaded his mother, who still seemed to be unconscious, on to a cart and started on his way to Mandya to take her to the town hospital. This meant that her sons were openly threatening to take the case to Mandya police, for if the old lady were admitted to the hospital a report would have to be made to the police. Yet to show that they were willing to compromise and settle the dispute within the village, Bhoomegowda stayed behind for the *panchayat* meeting. Remembering Bhoomegowda's threat, nobody at the meeting even mentioned any witchcraft accusation against Lingamma and only the matter of compensation due to her sons was discussed. One of the elders, an expert in deciding the amount of compensation due to an injured party, ruled that if Lingamma were to die Kempamma would have to give Rs. 350 to Bhoomegowda and his younger brother. But as long as Lingamma was alive and only slightly hurt by Kempamma Rs. 25 compensation would be sufficient. Bhoomegowda was not prepared to accept Rs. 25 as compensation and refused to go and fetch his brother back, who was on his way taking his mother to Mandya hospital. Kempamma, on the other hand, who was represented by her husband Chaudegowda, pointed out that they were too poor and could not possibly afford to pay Rs. 25 compensation. Chaudegowda complained that he and his wife were already heavily indebted. The expert arbitrator then approached Kempamma's brothers, who were slightly better off than Chaudegowda, and asked them to pay compensation on behalf of their sister. After further argument Bhoomegowda finally agreed to accept Rs. 35, which were paid over to him by Kempamma's brothers, on the understanding that he would receive a further Rs. 315 if his mother were to die of the injury caused her by Kempamma. Bhoomegowda then quickly left on his bicycle to intercept his brother and mother before they reached Mandya and bring them back to the village. Lingamma was thus brought back to Wangala where she recovered after a few days in her own home. The case was thereby settled though Kempamma and most other Wangala Peasants are still convinced that Lingamma is a witch.

I shall now examine the factors which led Kempamma to accuse Lingamma of witchcraft and which made other Wangala Peasants concur in her accusation, and shall try to explain the reasons which prevented them from levelling this accusation openly in front of the village *panchayat*. Lingamma's husband had been one of the richer

“middle-farmers”; he had bought his wife a buffalo to supply her with an independent source of income and shortly before he died about ten years ago he gave her a present of Rs. 500. This enabled Lingamma to become a moneylender, which she has been ever since. She is known in the village for her ruthlessness against her debtors and no-one turned to her for a loan unless he or she was absolutely forced to do so. Kempamma was one of her debtors. She had borrowed Rs. 100 about three years ago from Lingamma to help her husband purchase a pair of bullocks, but she had not paid one single anna interest on her debt in spite of the pressing demands from Lingamma. Kempamma’s father was the adopted brother of Lingamma and Lingamma’s own husband was a putative brother of Kempamma’s husband’s father (see chart 1). In other words, Kempamma and Lingamma both belonged to the same lineage and had also married into the same lineage. Thus Kempamma regarded Lingamma as one of her close kin and therefore considered the loan from Lingamma as a rightful claim on her part to help from her own kin. Lingamma’s insistent demands for interest payments on the loan led to tension between the two women. Kempamma was basing her claim to support from Lingamma on the custom prevalent in the traditional social system of Wangala Peasants whereby kin were obliged to help their needy relatives. Lingamma, on the other hand, was basing her demand for interest payments on the practice prevalent in the modern economic system whereby interest is considered the proper reward for a loan and the personal relationship outside the immediate family between debtor and creditor is disregarded. Here we have a clash between the values which stem from the traditional social system and those of the new economic system. The traditional social system is based on personal relationships, whereas the modern economic system is characterised by impersonal relationships. The ascribed status system which was part of Wangala’s traditional social organisation prescribed the relationship between Kempamma and Lingamma and obliged the latter to help the former. However, the introduction of a money economy undermined the customary system of ascribed status and this resulted in the tension between the two women. There was no institutionalised pattern of behaviour which would have allowed Kempamma to give vent to the aggression generated in her social relation with Lingamma. Accordingly when Kempamma was sick she sought an explanation in witchcraft. The belief in witchcraft is deeply rooted among Wangala Peasants. They believe in the full and explicit Hindu mythology concerned with explaining all the natural phenomena in the world: the creation of man and animals, the origin of death and disease and so forth. At the same time they argue that just as good can and does appear in the shell of a man—and there are several such mediums in Wangala—so evil spirits manifest themselves

through witches. Thus they harmonise witchcraft accusations with their general Hindu religious beliefs. Even my Brahmin research assistant told me that he too had been poisoned by a witch who was his neighbour and was jealous because he gained admittance to

Generation:



Legend:

- △ = man
- = woman
- ▲ = dead
- ◉ = marriage
- = putative relationship
- ... = adoption
- ⊙ = witch
- ⦿ = victim

Chart 1

Genealogy showing the relationship between Kempamma and Lingamma

university whereas her own son had failed in this. He was sick and, like Kempamma, went to a native doctor who made him vomit and then showed him two small black pills which were supposed to have been the poison he had been given by the witch. Thus we can see that even some of the urban Brahmins subscribe to witch beliefs. Therefore, Kempamma's witch beliefs were in accordance with more general Hindu beliefs. The native doctor certified her beliefs by showing her the little black pills which were supposed to have poisoned her. Who could mean her ill but Lingamma who was constantly pressing her to pay her long overdue interest and who was disregarding her 'rightful' claim to support?

In this case we see therefore the familiar situation where the concatenation of personal misfortune and the existence of a grudge is given expression in witchcraft accusations.¹⁰ Yet no mention of witchcraft was made before the *panchayat*. When I enquired from Kempamma why she had not brought her accusations of witchcraft before the *panchayat*, she said that she had been afraid that if she did this Bhoomegowda would take the case to Mandya police, as he was threatening to do, and there she would be most heavily fined or put into prison. She realised that the magistrate's court would not listen to any witchcraft accusation and would only condemn her for having hit the old lady. The elders with whom I discussed the case also said that though they were convinced that Lingamma was a witch they had not mentioned witchcraft to prevent Bhoomegowda from taking the case to Mandya police and outside the jurisdiction of Wangala's *panchayat*. When Chenamma had brought her case against Lingamma before the *panchayat*, they could and did discuss the witchcraft accusation because Lingamma had not been attacked then and therefore had no grounds to take the case to the magistrate's court. They dropped the case against Lingamma at the time because no damage had been done.

The existence of an external political authority enabled Bhoomegowda to threaten Wangala Peasants that if they mentioned any witchcraft accusation against his mother he would take the case to the Mandya police. Thus it was the pressure from the external political authority which prevented Wangala peasants from discussing the witchcraft accusation openly.

Nevertheless, the general belief held by Wangala Peasants was that Lingamma really was a witch. This general condemnation of Lingamma indicates the persistence of the value Wangala Peasants still attach to generosity to one's kin. A sociological function of witch beliefs widely recognised in the literature is their tendency to support the system of values and thus to sustain the social structure¹¹. Lingamma in short is condemned for being a greedy and grasping woman. At the same time such a condemnation is a re-affirmation

of the traditional social structure in which women did not enter the field of money lending. Their economic relations were with their own family or with their employers. The ideal Peasant woman, according to the traditional set of values, was a woman who worked hard on the lands of her husband and in her home, who bore many children, in particular many sons, and who was obedient to her husband and affines and generous to her kin and beggars. The obligation of mutual aid between kin is well documented for many subsistence economies. This emphasis on sharing in subsistence economy can be readily explained by the fact that an individual householder can do little else with his surplus but share it with his kin or neighbours. The introduction of cash and the link with a wider market makes economic differentiation on the basis of a greater variety of possessions possible. Under such conditions the emphasis on sharing will give way to a competitive system. "It can be stated as a theorem valid in a high percentage of cases, that the greater opportunity for profit in any social-cultural situation, the weaker the ties of extended kinship will become."¹² However, there appears to be a time lag between changes in the economic, political or general social sphere and changes in the set of values held by a society. Wangala's economic system changed from subsistence to cash about twenty years ago, while some of the values held by Wangala Peasants are still in line with the traditional subsistence economy. Although the joint family system has been superseded by the nuclear family, Wangala Peasants still set a value on lineage unity. They uphold generosity in a woman as a value and condemn the grasping ways of Lingamma, which are after all in accordance with the working of the modern cash economy. She is not the only woman who is thus condemned and accused of witchcraft.

There was, for instance, the case of Hanumegowda and Halgammamma. Henumegowda was an immigrant to Wangala. He was a landless Peasant employed as labourer on the nearby factory-owned sugarcane plantation. Halgammamma was a young Peasant widow who had been married to a "middle-farmer" in another village. Since she had no children and her husband had been an only child she inherited most of her husband's lands on his death. She decided to sell the lands and return to Wangala, her native village, where she now lives with her brother. With the money she got from the sale of her husband's lands she ventured into moneylending. Like Lingamma she is very insistent on getting interest payments on her loans and gives little attention to the ability or otherwise of her debtors to pay interest. Hanumegowda borrowed Rs. 50 from Halgammamma about two years ago and has not been able to pay any interest yet. Whenever Halgammamma met Hanumegowda in the street she stopped him and demanded payment of the long overdue interest. He was not the

only one to whom she did this; she kept stopping many other peasants in the village streets and shouted at them demanding payment of interest due to her.

One day I met Hanumegowda when he had been sick for several days and unable to go to work. When I enquired after his health he told me that he had just returned from a visit to a native doctor in another village who had given him some medicine, which had made him vomit the poison that had made him sick and he was now beginning to feel better. When I asked who had poisoned him he was at first very hedgy, but after some time he admitted that he was sure it was Halgamma. There were a few other Peasants present who all nodded their heads gravely and said that they too thought that Halgamma was a witch. 'She could not help but poison other people. She must do it so as to bring prosperity on herself and her family. If she stopped poisoning other people something bad would befall herself.'

Here too, as in the case of Lingamma, Halgamma was generally accused of being a witch and the relationship between her and her accuser was one of creditor-debtor. Wangala Peasants sided with Hanumegowda against Halgamma, though he was an immigrant and Halgamma a native of the village. He had their sympathy because she was a creditor to many other native Peasants who had also suffered from her meanness. Through the imputation of witchcraft her greed and bad temper was publicly condemned.

Whether or not the imputation of witchcraft is commonly accepted seems to depend largely on the status of the accuser and the number and status of people involved in economic relations with the accused. For instance, they did not concur in Mallegowda's witchcraft accusation against Timmamma. Mallegowda was a young Peasant. His father had immigrated to Wangala about twenty years ago when Mallegowda was a small boy. The family had chosen to move to Wangala because irrigation attracted labourers and farmers and it could establish a kinship link with some Wangala Peasants (Mallegowda's mother's mother was a native of Wangala). When the family first moved into Wangala they had no house and therefore went to stay with Mallegowda's mother's mother's father's brother's daughter's daughter Timmamma and her husband Kempegowda (see chart 2). This sort of far-distant relationship through the female line is hardly ever remembered among the patrilineal Peasants. It was only the needs of the emergency which induced Mallegowda's Parents to activate the relationship. Timmamma and her husband Kempegowda promised to help Mallegowda's parents but instead of receiving help they found that some of their own vessels disappeared in Timmamma's household. So Devamma, Mallegowda's mother, quarrelled with Timmamma and after only about one month's stay she and her family moved out of

Timmamma's house to build their own hut. Since that day relations between Mallegowda's family and Timmamma have been hostile.

Generation:

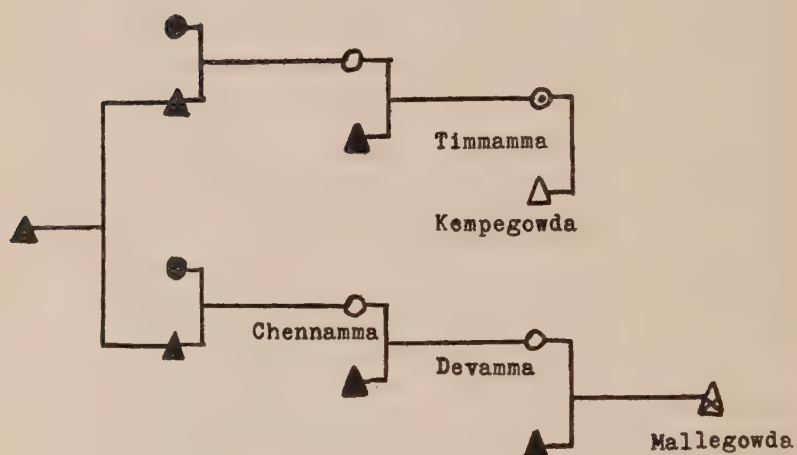
A

B

C

D

E



Legend:

- △ = Man
- = woman
- ▲● = dead
- ⌈⌋ = marriage
- ⊙ = witch
- △ = victim

Chart 2

Genealogy showing the relationship between Mallegowda and Timmamma

During my stay in Wangala a typhoid epidemic broke out in the village and Mallegowda was one of the victims. Being an employee on the nearby factory-owned sugarcane plantation he was entitled to

free medicine from the factory dispensary. Therefore he sent for some medicine as soon as he was taken ill. Since the medicine did not cure him within a few days his mother's mother, Chennamma, sent for a *pujari*, a priest belonging to the Ostaman caste, living in a neighbouring village. The *pujari* came and performed a number of rites over Mallegowda 'to free him from the evil spirit which was causing his disease.' When the *pujari* had finished with his rites Chennamma asked him who the evil spirit was that had caused Mallegowda's disease. The *pujari* then took out ten small shells and threw them on the ground like dice. He examined the position of the shells in relationship to each other and nodding gravely said that the evil spirit was a woman. Once more he threw the shells down and after examining again their position he pointed to the village and said she lived in Wangala. Whereupon Chennamma nodded knowingly. She then enquired from the *pujari* whether this was the same witch who had already poisoned herself, her daughter and Mallegowda on previous occasions. After throwing the shells on the ground once more and examining their position the *pujari* answered in the positive.

In this case the diviner was not from the same village as the victim. He was not familiar with the local friendships and animosities and therefore did not venture to specify the person he accused of witchcraft. He simply stated a category, namely women in Wangala, from whom the victim could choose the accused. Knowing that Wangala Peasants believe that only women are witches and aware of the fact that strained social relations are more likely to occur within the village, he made a fair guess when he suggested that the witch was a woman from Wangala. When I enquired from Chennamma whom she suspected to be the witch responsible for Mallegowda's disease she said that she knew it was Timmamma. Timmamma had come to their hut the day before Mallegowda was taken till, but she had not entered it because they were not on speaking terms. This must have been the occasion when Timmamma's evil spirit made Mallegowda sick. On previous occasions when Chennamma, her daughter or Mallegowda had been sick it was usually immediately after Timmamma had appeared in the vicinity of their hut. At each instance they had called a *pujari* and after he had performed some rites to counteract the evil spirit the victims were soon alright again. In this instance, too, Mallegowda soon recovered from his attack of typhoid after the *pujari* had performed his rites. As far as Chennamma knew Timmamma bewitched only her family and no one else in the village.

In this case no actual poison was supposed to have been administered, rather the evil spirit of a woman was believed to have caused the disease. The victim's relatives consulted an exorcist and asked him to divine who the witch was. But here too the accusation arose out of the social tension existing between the accused and the victims'

family. Again we find the lack of generosity being the cause of the conflict between the two parties involved. Chennamma felt that she had a claim to support from Timmamma who was her relative ; instead she found that Timmamma actually stole some of her vessels. This she could never forgive her. As with Kempamma so Chennamma and her daughter Devamma thought that they had a right to expect help from Timmamma. But whereas in the case of Kempamma almost the whole Peasant community of Wangala sided with her in regarding Lingamma as a witch, in the case of Mallegowda, who was an immigrant to the village and therefore had no established lineage in it, they did not accept the accusation against Timmamma. Nor were they convinced of Chennamma's claim to hospitality from Timmamma. The relationship between the two women was too far removed : moreover, the link was traced through the female line, which made them disinclined to regard Chennamma as at all related to Timmamma. Furthermore, Timmamma was a poor woman without any money to venture into moneylending. Besides Mallegowda and his family none had suffered from her exactions and so they had no reason to concur in Mallegowda's witchcraft accusation against Timmamma. This was realised by Chennamma when she said that as far as she knew Timmamma exercised witchcraft only against her family in Wangala.

There are four aspects of Wangala Peasant witch beliefs which are of sociological interest : firstly, all witchcraft accusations are against women ; secondly, they are all intra-caste ; thirdly, they arise out of tension in inter-personal relations ; and fourthly, peasants recognise that witchcraft usually operates between persons whose social relations are strained.

If we examine the social tensions which gave rise to witchcraft accusations among Wangala Peasants we find that in each of the three cases stated and in many others which I cannot relate here, it was generated by the strain resulting from the "meanness" of women. In two of the three cases the accused were moneylenders, which makes the impact of the modern cash economy on witchcraft accusations quite clear. This does not necessarily mean that witch beliefs did not exist in Wangala prior to the economy changing from subsistence to cash. It simply means that many of the witchcraft accusations now made among Wangala Peasants arise from tensions generated in modern social relations. It does not prove that during the time of subsistence economy there were no—or fewer—social relations generating tensions expressed in witch beliefs of that period.

Wangala Peasants have never accused men of witchcraft. As far as I could establish only women have been so accused. In a patrilineal community, such as that of Wangala Peasants, women are outsiders. They marry virilocally into the lineage of their hus-

bands but the absorption into it is only partial. They always maintain some links with their lineage and village of origin. In order to uphold the ideal of the unity and harmony of the patrilineal kin group in the face of conflicts arising in everyday relations between members of the group, witchcraft accusations have always been levelled against women, who are outsiders to the group. Similarly, women are always blamed for the break-up of a joint family. Brothers uphold the ideal of brotherly love and unity in the face of conflicting interests by blaming their difficulties on quarrels between their women-folk. Thus Peasant men relieve the guilt they feel for not living up to their social ideals by projecting it on to their womenfolk.

The new economic relations created by the cash economy between Peasant men have not led to witchcraft accusations because these relations run along links of traditional social structure. For instance, to the traditional relations between a Peasant patron and his Peasant client has been added an indebtedness relationship. The many strands which make up this patron-client relationship give it an element of flexibility. If a creditor pressed too much for payment of interest his debtor might refuse to work for him when he needed the latter's help. On the other hand, if a debtor refused to pay interest to his creditor for too long a time the latter might not employ the former as farm labourer any more. Thus the mutual dependence of creditor and debtor puts pressure on both of them to be reasonable in their demands on each other. The impersonal economic relations characteristic of a cash economy have been personalised among Wangala Peasant men by being added to the structure of traditional social relations. Any tensions that arise in these social relations may be either resolved by a socially approved mechanism such as the village *panchayat* or may be projected on to women as strangers in the patrilineal kin group. The fact that economic relations among women or between women and men are new and not reinforced by any traditional social relations has only exaggerated the position of women as scapegoats for all ills in Wangala Peasant society.

It is only during the last twenty years since money has been accepted as the general medium of exchange in Wangala's economy that women have taken to moneylending. Women lend money on a purely impersonal basis not only to kin, as in the case of Lingamma and Hanumegowda. They lend money not to strengthen an already existing link such as Peasant men do, but simply and solely to make money. Here we find a conflict between the value premises of the modern money economy and those of the traditional subsistence economy; the latter lays emphasis on sharing while the former emphasises individualistic gain and competition. There are no precedents for women acting as moneylenders in Wangala prior to the establishment of a cash economy. The consequent uncertainty in the

creditor-debtor relationship is one of the ingredients in the tension which becomes projected into witchcraft accusations and this is particularly the case where there is no socially approved mechanism for a debtor to air his grievance against his creditor. Neither Kempamma nor Hanumegowda could have taken their cases to the village *panchayat*, for the *panchayat* is officially bound to recognise the legal claims of Lingamma and Halgamma for payment of interest on their loans. Usually a debt is formalised by a legal document signed by creditor, debtor and witnesses. Thus creditors can always quite easily press their claims against their debtors by taking the case to the magistrate's court. However, the social pressures operating on a creditor prevent her from taking this step. In any case women are not accustomed to appear at courts and would, therefore, have to act through their husbands or sons who usually refuse to be part of such a legal transaction against one of their fellow villagers. But the existence of a legal document and the possibility of forcing one's claim against one's debtor at a magistrate's court puts pressure on the village *panchayat* to judge a dispute between a debtor and a creditor according to the legal principles laid down by the State. There is, therefore, no mechanism through which a harassed debtor can express his grudge against his creditor. The social tension arising between women creditors and their debtors has therefore no other outlet but witchcraft accusations.

Witchcraft accusations by Wangala Peasants are always intra-caste because relations between members of different castes are highly formalised and rights and duties are clearly recognised by all concerned. Wangala Peasants do not accuse members of other castes of witchcraft for the same reason as Zande people do not accuse nobles and seldom accuse influential commoners of witchcraft; not merely because it would be inadvisable to insult them but also because their social contact with these people is limited to situations in which their behaviour is determined by notions of status. As Evans-Pritchard says: "A noble is socially so separated from commoners that were a commoner to quarrel with him it would be treason. Commoners bear ill will against commoners and princes against princes . . . Offence is more easily taken at the words or actions of an equal than of a superior or inferior."¹³ The hierarchical structure of caste society makes for intra-caste rather than inter-caste quarrels. Peasants are socially so separated from other castes that tension is not likely to arise in their relationship. Such tension which does arise between members of different castes can be controlled or resolved by regulative social institutions such as, for instance, the hereditary master-client relationship between Wangala Peasants and Untouchables. If a dispute arises between a Wangala Untouchable and a Peasant, the former's Peasant master will be called upon to act as arbitrator. The rivalling loyalties imposed on such a Peasant arbitrator by his member-

ship of the same caste as one of the disputants, on the one hand, and his interest in the well-being of his Untouchable client, on the other, will bring pressure to bear upon him to find a solution acceptable to both parties. Whereas if a quarrel arises between a Peasant and his own Untouchable client the pressures arising from the desire on both parts to continue the mutually beneficial relationship will lead to a settlement of the dispute fairly quickly. In other words, whenever disputes can be settled by a socially recognised mechanism the tensions generated by them will comparatively easily be resolved. It is in case of grievances or grudges where no such mechanism exists that witchcraft accusations occur.

The three cases I discussed in this paper illustrate the way witchcraft accusations among Wangala Peasants arise out of strained social relations. In a small scale community such as that of Wangala Peasants, in which people live face to face, tensions are bound to occur in their everyday relations. But not all tensions find expression in witchcraft accusation; only tensions which have no other outlet lead to such accusations. Wherever a judicial mechanism exists to settle quarrels between individuals or groups tensions in their social relations can be brought out into the open and therefore will not be channelled into witchcraft accusations. Nevertheless, we must note at this point in the argument, that notions of witchcraft are evoked primarily by misfortune and are not entirely dependent on enmities. They represent a rationalising of misfortune which is done outside the "secular" field. Thus Kempamma, Hanumegowda and Mallegowda sought to find out who wished them ill and might have bewitched them only after they had been sick. Only then did they accuse certain women of being witches.

The channelling of social tensions and grief over misfortune into witchcraft accusations enables the victim and the accused to continue their relationship. By blaming misfortune on the supernatural powers of a certain woman the victim is not really accusing the person of the witch, but rather the evil spirit which operates within her. The accounting for his misfortune by the supernatural powers of a woman with whom the victim has strained social relations provides a safety valve to the pattern of social relations among Wangala Peasants. Without such safety device the tensions generated in certain relations may threaten to upset the whole social system. If, for instance, Kempamma were to blame Lingamma herself for having poisoned her, rather than believe that Lingamma is a witch who cannot help but poison her, this would lead to an open and irreparable breach between the two women. It would also probably divide the kin of both the lineage of origin of the two women and the lineage into which they both married, into those that supported Lingamma and those that stood by Kempamma, because kinship loyalties would force some to

support Lingamma. But as long as only the evil spirit within Lingamma is blamed for poisoning Kempamma the question of loyalty to Lingamma by some of her kin does not arise. Day-to-day relations can continue unperturbed. Kempamma and Lingamma were again on neighbourly terms a few weeks after the whole incident had occurred and Kempamma approached Lingamma for another loan but was refused. Thus the social relationship between the victim and the witch continues and so do the tensions arising out of it.

Wangala Peasants recognise that witchcraft accusations occur usually between persons whose social relations are strained. For instance, most Peasants agreed that Chennamma had accused Timmamma of witchcraft because the two women had been on bad terms for many years. Though in this case Peasant public opinion did not concur in the accusations against Timmamma, simply because Timmamma's greed and meanness was exemplified only in her relationship with Chennamma, they recognised the connection between social tension and witchcraft accusations in all cases. They realised it in the case between Kempamma and Lingamma by saying that Kempamma had been unjustly pressed for payment of interest by Lingamma and they also complained that Halgammma was too greedy in her demands on Hanumegowda. Wangala Peasants tend to attribute witchcraft to persons with traits they condemn, for example, greed, meanness and bad temper.

Thus there appear to be three main social functions of Wangala Peasant witch beliefs. Firstly, witchcraft acts as moralising agent by condemning socially undesirable traits in individuals; secondly, by blaming the evil spirit in a woman rather than the woman herself, witch beliefs help to sustain the social equilibrium; and thirdly, by upholding the traditional set of values witch beliefs strengthen the traditional social structure in which women did not enter the field of money lending.

NOTES & REFERENCES

- ¹ See E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes on Southern India*, 1906, or Sir A. C. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, First Series, 1899, London, John Murray, Albemarle Street, or W. Crooke, *Religion & Folklore of Northern India*, 1926, Oxford University Press.
- ² L. S. S. O'Malley, *Popular Hinduism*, 1935, Cambridge, at the University Press, p. 160.
- ³ M. G. Marwick, 'The Social Context of Cewa Witch Beliefs' in *Africa*, Vol. 22, 1952, p. 216.
- ⁴ Material for this paper was collected during two years field work (1954-1956) in Mysore villages.
- ⁵ I have changed the name of the village slightly using the initial "W" to remind the reader that it is a wet village.
- ⁶ E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, 1937, Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, p. 21.
- ⁷ Single quotation marks indicate statements made by informants.

- ⁸ Sir A. C. Lyall, *op.cit.*, p. 106.
- ⁹ All names are fictitious, though I have chosen customary Peasant names.
- ¹⁰ E. E. Evans-Pritchard says: In a study of Zande witchcraft we must bear in mind, firstly, that the notion is a function of situations of misfortune, and, secondly, that it is a function of personal relations." *op.cit.*, p. 106.
- ¹¹ See M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, 1936, Oxford University Press, or C. Kluckhohn, 'Navaho Witchcraft', *Papers of the Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology*, XXII, (1944), No. 2.
- ¹² R. Linton, 'Cultural and Personality Factors affecting Economic Growth'. in *The Progress of Underdeveloped Areas* (ed. by B. F. Hoeslitz), University of Chicago, 1952, p. 84.
- ¹³ E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *op.cit.*, pp. 104—5.

PROBLEM OF DRINKING IN THE PRIMITIVE TRIBES

S. C. VARMA

“Make a leaf-cup of *Sarai*,
Fill it with wonder liquor;
And when your heart and mine agree,
We will wander in forest together.”

(A MURIA SONG)

The question of enforcing prohibition among the tribals is being discussed with great concern in various quarters. It is a matter of common knowledge that the incidence of drinking is rather widespread and heavy among the tribals. They seem to have evolved an ingenious system justifying consumption of liquor on various occasions, may be of social or religious significance and even otherwise. “Men, young women and girls and boys drink, and mothers give liquor to their children except those only just born. Girls soon know when they have had enough, but even then never let the wine-bearer pass them without refilling their leaf-cup, which as soon as he has passed by, they take over to the youth of their fancy.” A tribal thus cannot do without drinks and in order to have a clear conscience, he has purposely lent to this habit a religious and social garb. He thus gets moral fortification by such a camouflage and maintains his respectability in the eyes of the world.

It may perhaps shake up many of our so-called reformists to learn that the use of the distilled spirit is the gift of the so-called civilised people to the tribal. Formerly, the tribals were by and large content with brewed or fermented drinks, like the rice-beer, *sulphi* (used in Bastar), etc., but we have in the past taught them the use of distilled alcohol, which has now taken deep roots among them. In NEFA area the distiller’s art is still not widely known or practised. Another gift of the so-called civilised people to the tribals is the institution of the liquor shop. In the good old days there used to be a local distiller belonging to a particular caste, namely, Kalar or Sondi, etc. He was treated as a village servant. His duty was to distil liquor, when needed, for social or religious festivities. He used to be remunerated in grain by villagers at the time of every harvest. This system was, however, displaced by a supposedly improved practice of auctioning liquor shops. The result was that a number of contractors and sub-contractors sprang up in the countryside, distilling and selling liquor in as large a quantity as they could—sometimes within the rules prescribed by the Excise Department and on many occasions even by contravening them. The more the tribals drank, the greater

was their profit. They were, therefore, the main cause of propagating this evil habit among the tribals who were previously content with occasional partaking of liquor on social or religious occasions.

It may here be mentioned that the introduction of the system of auctioning liquor among the tribals, was so much resented to by them in Bastar District of Madhya Pradesh that it was one of the causes of an open rebellion by them in 1910. The local contractor did not stop at the selling of liquor only. He turned into a local merchant and a money lender. In due course like an octopus he spread his tentacles all round the tribal economy and spared no effort to suck it as dry as he could. "When our mouth is full of liquor", says a Tribal, "we talk like kings. But when it is empty, we remember the money we had to borrow to pay for it."

This is so far as the historical background is concerned. The problem, however, is how to eradicate the evil of excessive drinking among the tribals. In this connection, the first thing which is to be understood clearly is that the process of eradication of drinking or propagation of temperance shall have to be gradual. If any reform is rushed through, it will leave in its wake problems bigger than the one which it was intended to solve. Apart from interfering with the smooth flow of life among the tribals, several evil practices like the illicit distillation and addiction to harmful drugs and tinctures may ravage the countryside and the nourishment which the tribals derive from brewed, fermented or distilled drinks may no longer be available, resulting in serious injury to their health and well-being. Moreover, in such matters, undue hurry and impatience do not produce lasting results. On the contrary, the reaction, which may be set off by any such attempt, is sure to make the task all the more difficult. After all what does it matter if the drinking-habit continues a little longer, when it has been there for ages and when by a cautious approach, there are fair chances of blunting its edge in course of time?

Enforcement of total prohibition among the tribals should be ruled out altogether. If we persist in any such attempts we shall be making the same mistake which has often been committed in the past; that is, of forcing something down the throat of the tribals which we think is good for them—an imposition from a supposedly superior people. We are doing this in respect of the Panchayats also. The existing Panchayat system in its present form has failed even amongst us and it is difficult to imagine what justification we can have for foisting it on the tribals in preference to their effective tribal councils or other local organisations. So far as total prohibition is concerned, let us ask ourselves whether it has succeeded to the extent intended by its up-holders even amongst the civilized people. Will it, therefore, succeed among the tribals? And when they are not supposed to have as much understanding, education and progress as we can flaunt.

Nothing has harmed the tribals more than the infliction of a system, institution or a way of life by the self-appointed Messiah of tribals, a large majority of whom happen to be non-tribals. Their contact with the tribals is mostly through books and occasional fleeting visits to them. These persons pretend to be groaning under the heavy strain of responsibility cast upon them by the society to reform the tribals. They seem to be carrying the 'white-man's burden', all piled up on their back by themselves. The tribals do not even know them. They look with bewilderment at them—the eloquent champion of their cause, their benefactors. The tribals find it difficult to make out what these persons are actually up to. In short, any superior attitude towards the tribals and the talk of uplifting them should be eschewed altogether and the presumption that whatever is considered good by us could be thrust upon the tribals, should be discarded forthwith. Total prohibition among the tribals has, in the present context, very slender chance of success and it may not be advisable to have an adamant attitude towards it.

Introduction of temperance through a gradual process offers the only solution. The success of this policy will, however, depend to a large measure, on the field work by Government servants and the workers of social organisations. By gentle persuasion, the tribals are to be told that excessive drinking has done them considerable harm. Well-studied publicity will have to be laid out. The women-folk will, in particular, have to be won over to this movement. This ground work will have to be done very carefully without treading on the toes of the tribals and hurting their religious or social sentiments and offending their keen sense of individual freedom. A tribal is not an automaton like a city-dweller and is rather sensitive about his individual freedom, even to cut valuable forests. The approach towards him in the matter of changing the deep rooted habit of drinking will have to be cautious, otherwise a chain-reaction may set in thwarting the entire effort. The Government servants and other workers engaged in the task should preferably be tribals themselves, or should, in any case, hail from the tribal society.

Our attempt at temperance shall be deemed to be successful when the tribals themselves come forward and move for the closure of liquor shops. The move should come from them. They should take the first step. They should be the main actors in the drama, although some prompting could be done from behind the screen. It should thus be possible in due course to reduce the number of liquor shops. The factor of easy availability will go and on account of sheer inertia and the natural reluctance to cover a long distance on foot to get a bottle, the craving to drink may subside.

Since there is acute shortage of social workers in the interior of the country and particularly in the tribal areas, the main brunt of the

task will fall on Government servants, particularly on the Gramsewaks, Extension staff of the Development Blocks, school teachers etc. They will need to be properly orientated by organising very short courses by persons of imagination and understanding. Let this not degenerate into a routine and long-drawn-out affair like any other training programme. The school teachers will have to shoulder particular responsibility in this effort. The evils of excessive drinking are to be dinned into ears of the children and there should be one or two lessons in the text books to this effect. Again, care will have to be taken to ensure that the sermons of the teacher or the lessons in the text books do not have the effect of belittling the tribals in the eyes of the world and of hurting their sentiments.

Such shops as may continue to vend liquor, may be entrusted to a local organisation in the village to be run on co-operative basis. There will then be no room for the greed to collect large profits by selling as much liquor as possible. The profits, if any, reaped by the local organisation, could be utilised for productive purposes. Let the liquor shops not be auctioned to the professional distillers from the towns and cities, whose only interest is to make substantial profits. The idea may perhaps shock some that the function of running a liquor shop should be assigned to a cooperative society. But where is the harm? Hitherto one man was reaping all the profits and the earnings of the tribals were drained by the shortest channel to the towns. But when a cooperative society takes his place, the greed for profit will no longer be there and the earnings of the tribals will remain in their village. The Society will also be more alive to its responsibilities to serve the best interests of the tribals.

In regard to the brewed and fermented drinks like rice-beer, palm juice, etc., the approach will have to be entirely different. In NEFA area and also in Baster "rice or millet beer holds an important place in the esteem of all the tribes. It is an essential element in the tradition of hospitality which is one of the most admired of tribal virtues; it is an important element in the price paid for a bride; it is almost a medium of exchange; it has its share in most religious rituals; no tribal conference can succeed without it; it is the pledge that binds together those who make a pact of peace." Grigson in his book "Maria Gonds of Baster" makes the following observations:—

"*Landa* (rice-beer) has to be provided in large quantities for all the guests at the wedding, when open house is kept; all present at funeral ceremonies need it, and some is poured over the menhir erected in the name of the dead man at the *Uraskal*; it is given to all who have worked on a new tank at the completion ceremony; a *handi* full is carried by a lad's father and party when going to ask a man for his daughter as wife for the lad; on the sixth day

after a child is born *landa* is given to the men and women called from each house for the naming; at sowing, reaping, threshing and ploughing a little is given to every helper; and at each *pandum* each household makes and consumes some."

It will thus be seen that these drinks belong to a separate class in contrast to distilled liquor vended in Government auctioned shops and figure prominently in tribal life. These are closely associated with social and religious life of the tribals. Moreover some of these drinks supplement the poor diet of the tribals and provide the much required vitamins and other nutrients. Any sudden change in the present practice of consumption of these drinks will not only hurt the sentiments of the tribals but will also adversely affect their health. The experts in food-technology may be asked to study the preparation of these drinks and suggest ways and means of improving their nutritional value and reducing the inebriating effect. These could then be propagated among the tribal through gentle persuasion and proper publicity.

We must also set up a rival for alcoholic drinks and this role could be played admirably by TEA. Its use is already fast spreading in the villages and in foreseeable future it is sure to reach even the most interior places. The problem of extending hospitality to a guest or to celebrate a social occasion will then be solved. The alcoholic drinks deeply entrenched as they are, will yield their place to tea only slowly. In due course, however, the tribals will get attached to the "cups that cheer but not inebriate".

Finally, let us not make unnecessary fuss about the matter. It creates alarm and prompts us to hasty action. The tribals resent it. The habit and tradition of drinking are very old, perhaps as old as human history. It cannot be cast off in one stroke. If we carry too many teachings to a tribal in a crusade to reform him over-night, he may keep quiet for some time but when his patience gets exhausted, he is likely to stand up and fling it back to us: "Physician! heal thyself."

INCIDENCE OF METOPIC SUTURE (in Skulls of M. P. Cadavers)

K. N. BHARGAVA AND SURESH SHARMA

At birth the frontal bone consists of two halves, separated by the frontal suture. In the second year of life union begins at the level of the frontal eminences and extends upwards and downwards. According to Brash (1951) the suture usually gets obliterated between sixth to tenth year. However, in certain individuals it fails to disappear and persists till late in life or sometimes even throughout life. This persistent frontal suture is known as "Metopic Suture" and the condition is described as "Metopism", (from the Latin word "Metope" meaning an interstice between two beam ends in Doric architecture).

The incidence of complete metopic suture has been reported differently by different workers in various races. Frazer (1948) reported total absence of fusion of the frontal suture in :

7 to 8% of European skulls.

1% of African skulls.

4 to 5% of skulls of yellow races.

Quain (1908) reported it in 8.7% of European skulls. Johnston & Whillis (1954) in Gray's Anatomy mentioned it to be present in 9% of European skulls, Keith (1949) reported its presence in 3 to 8% of individuals according to races.

Indarjit & Shah (1948) noted the presence of a complete suture in 5% of Punjabee skulls.

Rau (1934) studying skulls of Dravidians of Madras Province noted its presence in 4% of the cases.

The suture is said to be more common in brachycephalics than in dolichocephalics and the statement that the suture remains unobliterated more often in civilized (higher) races has raised the interest of quite a few anatomists as regards its morphological status. Ashley Montagu (1937), Bolk (1915), Hess (1945) and Girgis (1955) have studied the problem of Metopism from different angles. A survey of the literature showed that there are no adequate records on the persistence of metopic suture in Indian skulls, there are only two papers—viz., one of Rau (1934) on Dravidian skulls of Madras Province and the other of Indarjit & Shah (1948) on Punjabee skulls.

No record whatsoever on the incidence of metopic suture in the skulls of Madhya Pradesh (Central India) is available.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Seventy-five macerated adult skulls collected from cadavers dissected during the year 1955 to 1958 at the Gandhi Medical College, Bhopal provided the material for the present study. No attempt has been made to classify the skulls, according to age, sex or community. The subjects were mostly residents of Madhya Pradesh. All skulls were numbered and then classified into 4 groups.

Group A—showing persistence of complete metopic suture—5 skulls.

Group B—showing persistence of complete metopic suture with only slight obliteration at one end—1 skull.

Group C—showing remains of frontal suture at or near glabella—43 skulls.

Group D—complete obliteration of the frontal suture—26 skulls.

In groups A and B where the metopic suture was present, its pattern was transferred directly on paper by the following technique. A T-shaped thin paper was cut. The horizontal limb of the T was placed parallel to and covering the coronal suture. The vertical limb was moulded to cover the metopic suture. The extremities of the T were fixed with cellophane tape and then the entire suture transferred on the paper by rubbing a carbon paper on the sutures. The paper when unmounted and spread up gives not only a true copy of the pattern of the suture, but also a fair idea of its length, breadth and relation to bregma and nasion. The tracings so recorded are given in figures 7, 8 and 9.

Cephalic Index of the skulls belonging to groups A and B were also recorded.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to Wood Jones (1953) when the suture is persistent it has very definite characteristics. "It is a typical dentate suture, the edges of the two bones being finely serrated from the nasion to a point some 2 cms. anterior to coronal suture when its course becomes more simple and direct." The same author also mentions that the posterior end of the suture does not meet the sagittal suture in the median plane and may miss it by an interval as great as 15 m.m. In the same way the anterior end of the suture fails to meet the suture between the two nasal bones. The present study showed many variations from the above description.

In skull no. 3 (Figs. 1, 2 & 3)—The sagittal suture near the bregma was deflected to the right of median plane and joined the coronal suture 3.5 m.m. away from the sagittal plane. Pars bregmatica of the metopic suture was not plain, simple or direct. It presented an

S shaped curve, deflecting to the right of median plane and joined the coronal suture. This part like the rest of the suture was also finely serrated. Horizontal distance between the anterior end of sagittal suture and the posterior end of metopic suture was 1.2 cms. The antero-inferior part of the suture was prominent and was practically in line with the suture between the two nasal bones.

In skull no. 24 (Figs. 4, 5 & 6)—The sagittal, coronal and the frontal sutures met at the bregma making a sign of +. There was no deflection of the Pars bregmatica. This part was grossly serrated. The antero-inferior part of the metopic suture showed signs of slight obliteration just above the glabella. Lower down it was again quite evident and deflected slightly to the right and was not in line with the nasal suture.

In skull no. 31 (Figs. 7, 8 & 9)—The bregmatic part of the metopic suture was deeply serrated and was not plain and direct. At its posterior extremity it deviated slightly to the right and joined the coronal suture which was drawn like a V. The posterior extremity of the suture did not meet the anterior end of the sagittal suture and missed it by 15 m.m. The middle portion of the metopic suture was much simpler. It was simple, having no serrations and presented an S shaped curve. The antero-inferior part was finely serrated and joined the nasal suture.

In skull 13 of Group B—The Pars bregmatica was completely obliterated resulting in synostosis. The remaining part of the suture remained unobliterated. The suture started about 5 cm anterior to the coronal suture. The anterior extremity of the suture was not in line with the suture between the two nasal bones, being deflected to the right by 3 m.m.

No wormian bregmatic bone, which is also some times called Ossa interfrontalia was observed in any of the above skulls of Group A and B. However the deflection of the suture in the Pars bregmatica is probably because of the presence of a wormian bone in earlier stages which subsequently fuses with one or the other half of the frontal bone, causing a deflection either to the right or the left, as seen here the deflection was always present on the right side.

Remains of the frontal suture at or near the glabella were noticed in nearly 60% of cases i.e. in 43 skulls. It is commonly said that even in the adult it is invariably possible to see the traces of the metopic suture near the nasion. The statement may not be absolutely true as such. During childhood the superior border of the nasal bone overlaps the frontal bone, but as age advances and the skull grows, the superciliary arches make their appearance, (Wood Jones 1953) the nasal process of the frontal bone tends to over-ride the upper part of the nasal bone and bury them. According to Wood Jones (1953) "it is this bilateral new growth of the nasal areas of the frontal bones,

meeting in the mid line, that commonly produces the appearance of a secondary suture in the adult."

He further mentions that a true persistent frontal suture is invariably simple and linear in this region whereas the so-called persistent lower remains of the otherwise obliterated metopic suture is not so simple. It is highly complex and shows various patterns. The present study confirmed the above statement.

In one particular case (Fig. 10 skull no. 43) the remains of the suture were represented by double sutures which met each other at the nasion forming a V shaped pattern. Such an arrangement may be due to reasons already explained above and not due to extra centres of ossification as suggested by Indra Jit & Shah (1948). Small supranasal ossicles (wormian bones) were seen in remains of the suture in only three skulls. Length of the sutural remains varied from 4 m.m. to 10 m.m.

Cephalix Index of the skulls of group A and B were as follows :

$$\frac{\text{Maximum Breadth} \times 100}{\text{Maximum Length}}$$

$$\text{Skull No. 3. } \frac{13.2 \times 100}{16.5} \text{ Cephalic Index} = 80.$$

$$\text{Skull No. 24. } \frac{12.6 \times 100}{17} \text{ Cephalic Index} = 73.9.$$

$$\text{Skull No. 31. } \frac{12.6 \times 100}{18} \text{ Cephalic Index} = 70.$$

$$\text{Skull No. 13. } \frac{13.0 \times 100}{16.4} \text{ Cephalic Index} = 79.8.$$

$$\text{Skull No. 32. } \frac{12.5 \times 100}{17.5} \text{ Cephalic Index} = 71.3.$$

The results are classified into three groups.

- (1) Dolichocephalic, with an index below 75 (skulls Nos. 24, 31 and 32.)
- (2) Mesaticephalic ranging from 75 to 80 (skulls Nos. 3 and 13.)
- (3) Brachycephalic with an index over 80—(Nil.)

In the present study the findings are contrary to the common belief that the metopic suture is more common in brachycephalic skulls than in dolichocephalics. None of the skulls showing the suture belonged to the brachycephalic group.

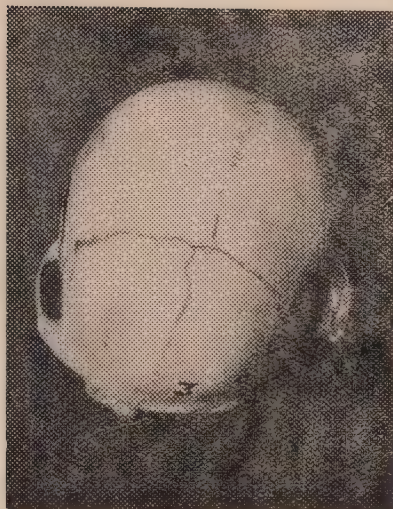


Fig. No. 1.
Showing metopic suture of skull
No. 3 from front.

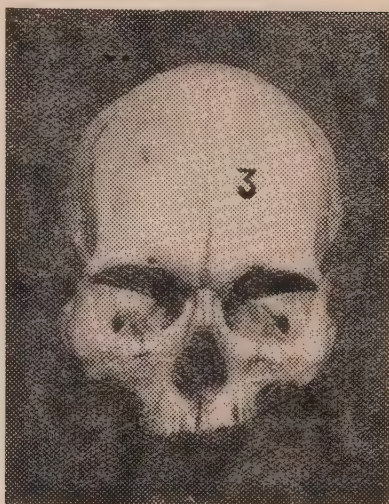


Fig. No. 2.
Showing metopic suture of skull
No. 3 from above

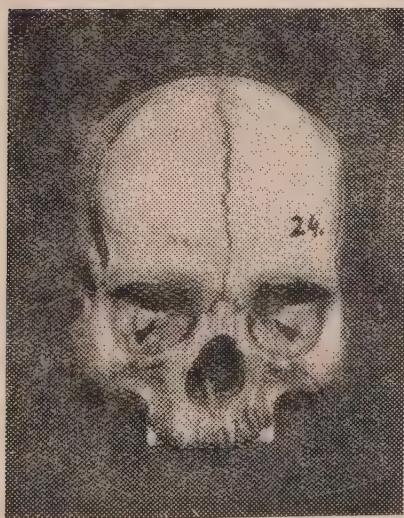


Fig. No. 4.
Showing metopic suture of skull
No. 24 from front



Fig. No. 5.
Showing metopic suture of skull
No. 24 from above

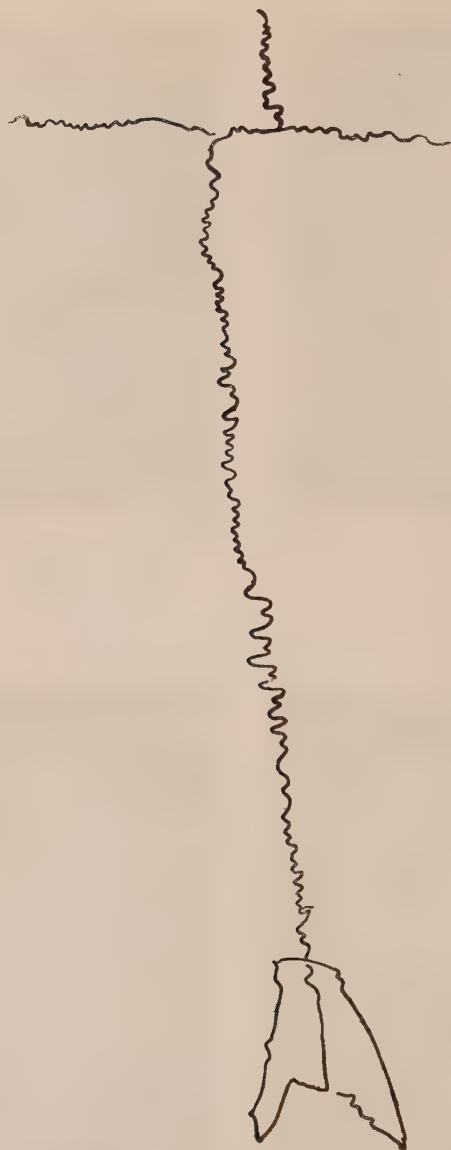


Fig. No. 3.
Showing tracing of the metopic suture of skull No. 3.

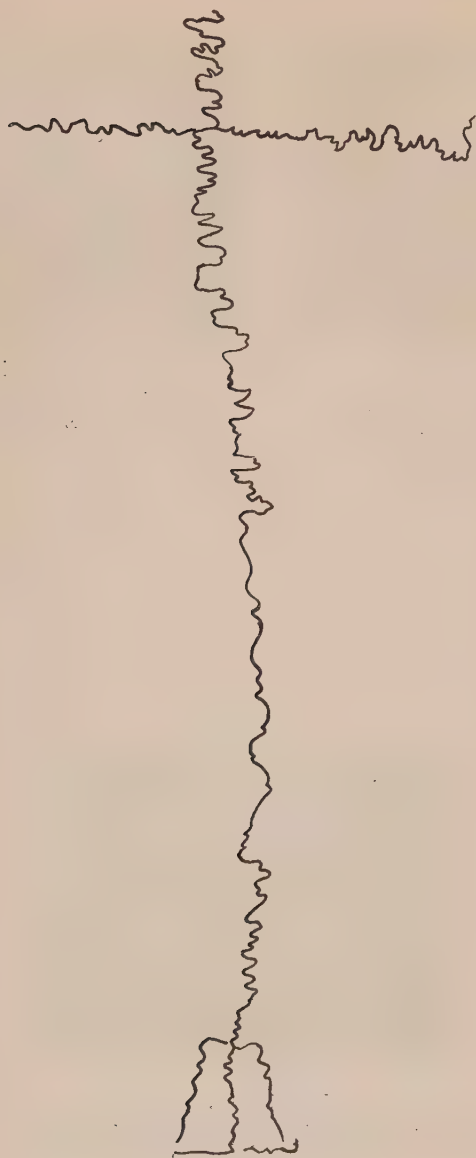


Fig. No. 6.
Showing tracing of the metopic suture of skull No. 24.



Fig. No. 7.
Showing metopic suture of skull
No. 31 from front



Fig. No. 8.
Showing metopic suture of skull
No. 31 from above.



Fig. No. 10.
Showing pattern of remains of metopic suture
skull No. 43.



Fig. No. 9.
Showing tracing of metopic suture of skull No. 31,

SUMMARY

Seventyfive fully grown skulls of dissection hall cadavers (mostly inhabitants of Madhya Pradesh) were examined. Metopism or complete frontal suture was present in only (including Group A and B) 5 skulls *i.e.* in 6.3% of cases. The different patterns of the suture have been described in detail. Pars bregmatica was invariably deflected to the right.

No wormian bone in the region of Pars bregmatica was seen in any of these cases.

Remains of the suture at or near the nasion were seen in 60% of skulls. Their developmental significance has been discussed. Supra nasal bones were present in remains of the suture only in three skulls.

Persistence of the frontal suture was seen at either end lending support to the existing view that the union of frontal bones start first in the middle at the level of frontal eminence.

Contrary to the present belief out of the five specimens recorded under group A and B showing metopic suture, none was brachycephalic—three being dolichocephalic and two mesaticephalic.

There was complete absence of the frontal suture or its remain in about 37% of the cases (28 skulls).

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MEASUREMENT OF TASTE SENSITIVITY TO PHENYLTHIOUREA (P.T.C.) IN UTTAR PRADESH

R. P. SRIVASTAVA

The study of genic polymorphism of human populations with respect to their taste sensitivity to phenylthiourea (P.T.C.) has been done by Sanghvi, *et al.* ('50) in Bombay, Lugg, *et al.* ('55) in Madras, Das, ('56) in West Bengal, and Vayas, *et al.* ('58) in Gujrat. No investigation of this nature has been conducted in Uttar Pradesh so far. It is with this view in end, that an attempt has been made here to find out the frequency of tasters and non-tasters in Uttar Pradesh by means of a series of graded concentration of P.T.C. solutions.

Material : 247 male students from Lucknow University and 97 professional donors from the U.P. Blood Bank, Lucknow, have been tested during the years 1957-59. The sample is drawn from all over U.P. comprising 22% of it from eastern, 13% from western, 46% from central, 8% from northern and 11% from southern parts of U.P. respectively.

Method : There are several methods which have been used by various investigators, to classify people as tasters and non-tasters according to their taste sensitivity to P.T.C. The method employed in the present study is the sorting technique, suggested by Harris and Kalmus ('49). Instead of boiled tap water, distilled water was used in the preparation of the solutions, as well as in the test.

RESULTS

Proportion of non-tasters to tasters : Taste thresholds for P.T.C. for 344 individuals, classified by age have been shown in table 1. It is apparent from the age distributions in table 1, that the majority of subjects are fairly evenly distributed within the age range of 16-27 years. From this age range onward, the subjects are few. Since the antimodal value or the minimum frequency is taken as the critical concentration for the separation of tasters from non-tasters (Falconer '47). The antimode falls at the solution no 5 in this series. Though the frequency is slightly higher, yet it is difficult to explain. On the basis of this classification the following percentages of tasters and non-tasters are obtained (table 2). Non-tasters are from solution no. 0-5 whereas the tasters are from 6-14.

TABLE 1

TASTE THRESHOLDS FOR P.T.C. FOR 343 SUBJECTS (MALE)

| Age in years | S O L U T I O N S | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|--------------------|-------------------|---|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | |
| 16—17 | | | | 2 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | | | | | 17 |
| 18—19 | | 2 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 2 | 13 | 14 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | | 67 |
| 20—21 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 12 | 2 | 20 | 14 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | | 90 |
| 22—23 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 10 | 1 | 13 | 12 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 2 | | | 76 |
| 24—25 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 7 | | 8 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 1 | | | | 48 |
| 26—27 | | | | 2 | | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | | 11 |
| 28—29 | | | | | 2 | | 2 | | | 2 | 1 | | | | | 7 |
| 30—31 | 1 | | | 2 | 2 | | 2 | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | 9 |
| 32—33 | | | | | 1 | | 3 | 1 | | | | | | | | 5 |
| 34—35 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 3 | | | | 1 | | | | | 6 |
| 36—37 | | | | | | | 3 | 1 | | | | | | | | 4 |
| 38—39 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| 40—41 | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | 3 |
| Total | 9 | 6 | 15 | 29 | 52 | 9 | 73 | 57 | 33 | 24 | 23 | 7 | 6 | 1 | | 344 |

TABLE 2

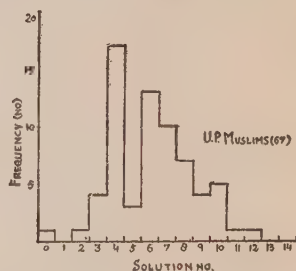
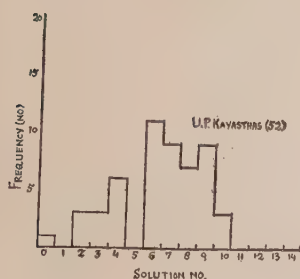
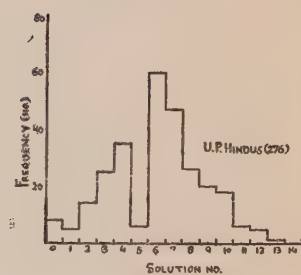
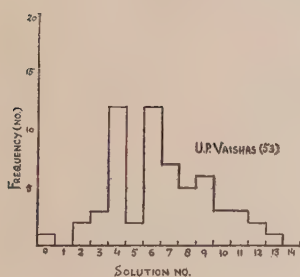
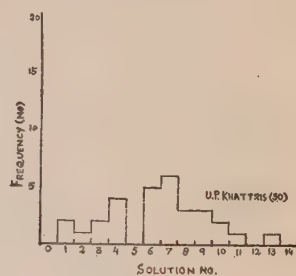
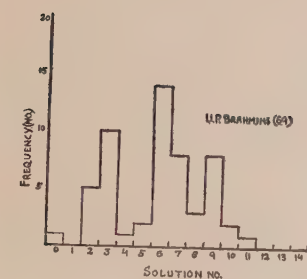
PERCENTAGES OF TASTERS AND NON-TASTERS

| T A S T E R S | | N O N-T A S T E R S | | Total |
|---------------|------------|---------------------|------------|-------|
| Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | |
| 224 | 65.11 | 120 | 34.88 | 344 |

Table 3 will give an idea about the distribution of taste thresholds for P.T.C. for some of the endogamous groups among Hindus, and of Muslims. Apart from Brahmins, Vaishas, Kayasthas, and Khattris, no other group could be split up, because of insufficient data. Table 4 shows the percentages of tasters and non-tasters among the various above mentioned groups. Values of Chi-square test for heterogeneity among Hindu castes as well as among Hindus and Muslims, are also given below table 4.

TABLE 3

ASTE THRESHOLDS FOR P.T.C. FOR HINDUS AND MUSLIMS



1. Brahmins
2. Vaishas
3. Kayasthas
4. Khattris
5. Total Hindus
6. Muslims.

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGES OF TASTERS AND NON-TASTERS IN VARIOUS GROUPS

| Groups | Tasters | | Non-tasters | | Total |
|--------------|---------|------------|-------------|------------|-------|
| | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | |
| Brahmins | 52 | 75.36 | 17 | 24.63 | 69 |
| Vaishas | 33 | 62.26 | 20 | 37.73 | 53 |
| Kayasthas | 39 | 75.00 | 13 | 24.99 | 52 |
| Khattris | 21 | 70.00 | 9 | 30.0 | 30 |
| Total Hindus | 183 | 66.06 | 94 | 33.94 | 277 |
| Muslims | 41 | 61.19 | 26 | 38.80 | 67 |

Hindu Castes $X^2 = 2.721$, 3 d.f. P. between 0.3 — 0.5Hindus and Muslims $X^2 = 0.51$, 1 d.f. P. between 0.3—0.5

Influence of Age: To study this, the present sample does not provide sufficient data in the higher age ranges; hence no conclusion can be put forward.

Influence of Smoking: The subjects have been also classified according to whether they are smokers or non-smokers, as shown in table 5. Persons who smoke more than seven cigarettes or *bidis* daily have been recorded as smokers. There are 216 non-smokers and 128 smokers. The average threshold of the former is 5.94, and of the latter 6.32, indicating the average threshold of the smokers to be slightly higher.

TABLE 5

SHOWING THRESHOLDS OF SMOKERS AND NON-SMOKERS

| Groups | S O L U T I O N S | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|-------------|-------------------|---|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | |
| Non-smokers | 5 | 5 | 14 | 17 | 35 | 7 | 45 | 37 | 13 | 15 | 17 | 3 | 4 | 1 | | 216 |
| Smokers | 4 | 1 | 1 | 12 | 17 | 2 | 30 | 20 | 20 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 2 | | | 128 |

DISCUSSIONS

The mean percentage of non-tasters in the present series comes to 34.88. Among the Hindus and Muslims it comes to 33.94 and 38.80 per cent. respectively. Brahmins, Vaishas, Kayasthas, and Khattris have got 24.63, 37.73, 24.99, and 30.00 per cent. respectively. When these four endogamous groups of Hindus are together put to X^2 test for heterogeneity, it is found that they are not classifiable as distinct groups on the basis of P.T.C. test. Similarly, Hindus and Muslims also cannot be distinguished as two distinct communities

on the basis of this test. It is interesting to note that other genetical characters like ABO blood groups in Uttar Pradesh (Majumdar, 1947) do not suggest heterogeneity among the Hindu castes, as well as among Hindus and Muslims, when they are put to X^2 test (Hindu castes $X^2=20.81$, 15 d.f. P between 0.1–0.2; Muslims and Hindus $X^2=1.33$, 1 d.f. P between 0.5–0.7).

Outside U.P. there is another series of work on P.T.C. in various castes and Dubla tribe of Gujrat (Vayas, '58). When the castes of Gujrat are pooled for X^2 test, exhibit heterogeneity ($X^2=16.48$, 4 d.f. P less than 0.01).

The mean percentage of non-tasters in our series is quite different from that of Marathas (Sanghvi '49), Tamil Indians (Lugg '55) and Gujratis (Vayas '58). U.P. Brahmins seem to be different from that of Rarhi Brahmins of West Bengal (Das '56), as the percentage of non-tasters is 24.63 and 33.74 respectively. Outside India, U.P. population seems to correspond to Europeans (Harris and Kalmus, '49) rather than to Chinese (Barnicot, '50).

It is said that use of tobacco might decrease the capacity to taste P.T.C. But in our series the average threshold of smokers is slightly higher than non-smokers; hence the data indicate that smoking has no influence on taste sensitivity to P.T.C. This also holds true in case of Falconer ('47) and Pons ('55) investigations.

In table 6 we present data for different populations for the sake of comparison.

TABLE 6

| Population | Number | Percentage Non-tasters | Authors |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| English | 441 ♂ | 31.5 | Harris & Kalmus ('49) |
| Chinese | 66 (55♂ + 11♀) | 10.6 | Barnicot ('50) |
| Marathas | 195 | 43.58 | Sanghvi, et al. ('50) |
| Tamil Indians | 50 ♂ | 26.8 | Lugg, et al. ('55) |
| Rarhi Brahmin of West Bengal | 489 (277♂ + 212♀) | 33.74 | Das ('56) |
| Kapol Vania | 200 (100♂ + 100♀) | 51.6 | Vayas, et al. ('58) |
| Bhangi Harijans of Saurashtra | 195 (96♂ + 99♀) | 44.1 | " " " |
| Cutchi Lohana | 198 (100♂ + 98♀) | 39.3 | " " " |
| Adichya Brahmins of Shihor Sampradaya | 198 (98♂ + 100♀) | 37.3 | " " " |
| Leva Patidars of Chartor | 199 (100♂ + 99♀) | 32.6 | " " " |
| Talvia Dubla | 206 (104♂ + 102♀) | 44.1 | " " " |
| TOTAL GUJRAT | 1196 | 44.5 | " " " |
| U.P. Brahmins | 69 ♂ | 24.63 | Present author |
| U.P. Vaishas | 53 ♂ | 37.73 | " " |
| U.P. Kayasthas | 52 ♂ | 24.99 | " " |
| U.P. Khatris | 30 ♂ | 30.0 | " " |
| U.P. Total Hindus | 277 ♂ | 33.94 | " " |
| U.P. Muslims | 67 ♂ | 38.80 | " " |
| TOTAL U.P. | 344 | 34.88 | " " |

Summary: The method suggested by Harris and Kalmus has been used in the present investigation. The mean percentage of non-tasters in U.P. comes to 34.88, which is different from that of Marathas, Tamil Indians, and Gujratis. Hindu castes cannot be classified as distinct groups on the basis of P.T.C. test. Similarly, Hindus and Muslims are also not distinguishable on the basis of this test. U.P. Brahmins differ from that of Rarhi Brahmin community of West Bengal. U.P. population seems to correspond to Europeans rather than to Chinese. Smoking has no influence on taste sensitivity to P.T.C.

Acknowledgement: I take the opportunity of thanking those students of Lucknow University, and the professional donors of the U.P. Blood Bank, Lucknow, who have ungrudgingly offered themselves to P.T.C. test. I also owe my thanks to Dr. J. G. Jolly, M.D., Medical Officer-In-charge, U.P. Blood Bank, Lucknow, for permitting me to carry on this test on the donors. I am particularly indebted to my teacher Sri D. K. Sen, for his guidance and valuable suggestions in writing this paper. I also thank my friend Sri G. K. Shukla for the statistical calculations.

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RESEARCH NEWS AND VIEWS

In a paper published in the *American Anthropologist*, Volume 61, No. 1, February, 1959, Dr. M. N. Srinivas has elaborated his concept of 'dominant caste' which had discussed earlier in 1955. Writing about the 'dominant caste' in Rampura (a Mysore village), Srinivas contends that *Okkaligus* (a caste of peasants) is 'dominant' in Rampura, even though their "ritual rank is not very high". According to the author a caste's numerical strength, the economic position, education and political power of its members leads to its dominance in the village. Usually the different elements of dominance are distributed among different castes in a village. When a caste enjoys all or most of the elements of dominance, it may be said to have decisive dominance. Other castes come to fear its members and accept their interference in settling their own internal disputes. The dominant caste has jurisdiction (in the settling of disputes) over all the castes living in a village.

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Dominant caste is also the theme of a paper by Adrian C. Mayer published in the *South Western Journal of Anthropology*, Volume 14, No. 4, Winter, 1958. For his discussion, Mayer has chosen a wider field, viz., a 'region' instead of a 'village'. In Mayer's village in Malwa, as also in the small region in which this village is situated, Rajputs are the dominant caste. Their dominance, says Mayer, is because of their traditional position as rulers in Western India, their numerical strength and economic power in neighbouring villages. "Dominance", he writes, "is a two-way affair". On the one hand, the dominant caste controls much of the activities (and not only the disputes) of the other villagers; on the other hand, the customs of the dominant caste are objects of emulation for a considerable section of the village population, as Rajput customs are in Malwa villages for a number of 'lower' castes.

Dominant caste obviously is a useful concept for rural analysis in India. Srinivas thinks it is essential to the understanding of rural society in India. Mayer writes it is a descriptive concept but probably unsatisfactory from the point of view of analysis, "for one cannot analyse dominance as a whole but must deal with each sphere of power in turn".

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"Some Functional Considerations on the Handaxe" by Merrick Posnansky, published in the March 1959 issue of "*Man*, A Monthly Record of Anthropological Sciences", Vol. LIX, is based on the study

of the Turton Collection of flint and quartzite handaxes from the Trent Valley, and flint handaxes from Purze Platt in Wollaton Park Museum, Nottingham.

The conclusions drawn by the author indicate that Lower Palaeolithic handaxes were made for left-handed as well as for right-handed use, but a large proportion could be used just as well in either hand, while the number of tools better suited to left-handed usage is larger than 5-15 per cent. of the total, the right-handedness became predominant following the increasing specialization of tool forms in Bronze Age.

The handaxes have served as scraper of various forms and probably as skinning knife. The thin point of evolved Middle Acheulian handaxes might have been owing to the need for a thinner cutting tool.

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In an article "The frequency of Twinning in Poor Chinese in the Maternity Hospital, Singapore," published in "Annals of Human Genetics," Vol. 23, part 2, April 1957, Jean Millis has given certain interesting conclusions on the incidence of twinning in Chinese. His findings are based upon 516 pairs of twins in 47,572 deliveries to poor Chinese in the years 1950-53. The frequency to twinning according to Jean Millis increased with maternal age to a maximum in 35-39 years group, but at all age levels monozygotes are more common. Dizygotic twinning is low in Chinese and Japanese people, than those of Caucasian and Negroid people. But it is interesting to note that when all twin births are considered together, Chinese correspond in behaviour to Caucasians.

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"Growth of the Main Head Dimensions From Birth up to Twenty Years of Age in Czechs," by Milan Dokladal, appearing in February 1959, issue of "Human Biology," Vol. 31, no. 1, is an addition to the previous literature on the growth of the head. The author has confined his investigation to describe the growth of three dimensions of the head from birth to maturity, for which he has included three measurements, viz., circumference, length, and breadth. The sample consisted of 2,879 boys and 2,763 girls of Czech nationality. The data suggested that above 6 years of age, the head dimensions of Czech are comparatively stable, and do not indicate any evolutionary changes of the sort which have taken place in some populations elsewhere, in the body. In the end the author maintains that "within Czechoslovakia at least, these measurements may serve as useful norms for the estimation of physical development of children—especially in conjunction with recently published tables of stature and weight.

BOOK REVIEWS

RURAL SOCIOLOGY IN INDIA (REVISED EDITION) BY A. R. DESAI—PUBLISHED BY THE INDIAN SOCIETY OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, BOMBAY, 1959. PP. XVII 440. Rs. 20.00

This book in its present form is a revised edition of an earlier publication in 1953. As Sri Manilal B. Nanavati, President of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics says in his foreword, during the intervening period considerable literature portraying the conditions of rural India has been coming out, and these certainly have given new information about the various facets of Indian rural life. The revised edition, therefore, has brought up-to-date the scattered material on rural life, and we welcome the venture. In the introductory chapter, Dr. Desai underlines the importance of rural studies, and pleades for a science of rural studies, or rural sociology, which he thinks "has still to be created". One may not agree with Dr. Desai entirely as rural sociology is not unknown in India and many universities do teach rural sociology as a special option for students offering any or more of the social sciences. We are anxious for names, and therefore, we have confusing numbers of disciplines, and if one looks at the curricula of studies presented by the many universities, one would be convinced of duplication, wastage and what not. Can rural sociology ignore anthropology? Can rural sociology be studied without economics? Can rural sociology be divorced from sociology proper? Can sociology be divorced from social anthropology? What we need is an emphasis on rural studies and not to put it away and develop it in isolation. Rural sociology or rural anthropology must be regarded as indispensable specialisation in sociology and anthropology, also in economics. If we look into the subject matter of the various contributions compiled in the book under review, we shall find that rural sociology finds its flesh and marrow from the allied disciplines and must continue to derive its spirit as well as its form from the other social sciences. As a matter of fact the time has come when we should ponder over the question of the unity of the social sciences, rather than their respective identity; for example, sociology and social anthropology need not remain separate disciplines, and cultural anthropology, rural sociology and sociology can become bed mates without infringing the laws of partnership. Separatism, or the creation of a separate, science of rural sociology, if it is carried to its logical end, will mean that physical anthropology will be taught as social biology, as is being done at some Universities.

The merit of a book like the one here, which has a wide coverage and a mass of useful research from different disciplines and from the

writings of many social scientists can not be judged fairly. In a compilation like this some of the papers must be excellent, some are indifferent and even substandard. This is natural in a publication aiming at a synoptic multi-sided and rich picture of Indian rural society as it is emerging from the growing body of literature.' We will do well to take Dr. Desai's view on the Community Development Projects—an evaluation. Dr. Desai quotes relevant extracts from a number of writers on the achievements and failures of the C.D.P., and comes to the conclusion that sociologically 'the Community Development Programme is not merely proving futile in its acclaimed goals but is becoming harmful?' In a second paper on Impact of Governmental Measures on Rural Society (p. 413-422), Dr. Desai concludes, the rural change that is generated by the government measures is tending to sharpen the contradictions among various classes in the rural society and in the context of caste and other institutional background, is slowly unleashing tensions, antagonisms and collisions, the implications of which have to be properly comprehended if the direction of the development of one fifth of mankind is to be assessed and implied. This is certainly sound judgement and all field scientists in the social field will agree with Dr. Desai. But what Dr. Desai calls the failure of the C.D.P, one could call it its success, for by underlining the factions and antagonisms, the C.D.P. has brought to the surface what has remained dormant, and has been corroding our village life without our being aware of. This may be regarded as the negative result of of the C.D.P, but is more important than the success we have been told, of artificial insemination, social education and *shramdan*.

The merit of the book, however, lies in the fact that Dr. Desai has banged on the right door and has shown the vast field of research ahead of us and the literature we possess today. Dr. Desai and the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, Bombay, and its indefatigable president, Sri Manilal B. Nanavati should be complimented for the source book on rural studies that they have produced.

E. T.

RACE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS BY BREWTON BERRY—
PUBLISHED BY HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY, BOSTON. THE
RIVERSIDE PRESS, CAMBRIDGE, 1958. PP. X+559.

This second edition of the author's *RACE RELATIONS* published in 1951 which was well received and earned coveted Anisfield—Wolf Award is a timely revision in view of the fast and many changes that have taken place in the recent past in the relations of dominant and minority groups.

As the author himself puts it in the preface, the book is an attempt to "describe and analyse the phenomena which arise when groups

of people who differ racially and culturally come into contact with one another". This he has done with success.

As the book is primarily intended for the use of the American college students, the race problems of the U.S.A. have received special treatment. Furthermore, Berry has made free use of certain sociological concepts such as culture groups, folk-ways, diffusion, personality, etc. "without subjecting them to any thorough analysis and definition, and the standard sociological concepts—conflict, assimilation, amalgamation, domination, segregation, stratification and the like are entirely adequate" for his discussion. He has also kept the technical terminology at the minimum.

The problems of race relations are as old as humanity itself, but the colour they have taken and the acuteness encountered today has a new garb in relation to the present environment and is essentially topical. It is true that in the study of race problems there has recently been a shift from biological to a social point of view but one wonders how the sociologists can afford to ignore the biological grounds of differences of the groups in the study of social relations? But to say that "cultural differences are augmented and sustained by differences in the physical traits, and physical traits are the symbols of differences in culture" is hard to swallow, as there remains now no doubt that the physical traits have biological basis whereas culture is a man-made one which can be acquired and lost.

Races do exist and the differences are there but this does not mean that the prejudices are merely racial; they are economic, psychological, symbolic, etc. If an effort is made to understand the tangle from this point of view and an awareness is developed, the task of improving human relations can become lighter and easier. From this angle Berry's attempt is a conspicuous success. To the problems of inter-group relationships, Berry puts forward a solution and not the solution which may or may not help in all the cases. His concluding remarks that "there are good reasons for believing, however, that whatever be one's disposition, and whatever be his goal the prospects for a happy solution of race problems are best in a society in which democratic ideals flourish and in which social change is accomplished by the democratic process of free discussion and free expression of opinions", at least give us some hope. With his broad vision and convincing arguments, Berry has done a definite service. He has tried to strike a balance between two types of thinking about race relations—one of despair or indifference, and the other of romantic zeal for easy and quick remedies.

The changed title of the book with the addition of the word 'ethnic' brings it more in tune with current attitude to race relations. The problems today are not merely between the White and the Black but embrace the problems of relationship of even those groups which

may be of different ethnic types of the same big division—the race.

R. D. SINGH

THE PREHISTORIC BACKGROUND OF INDIAN CULTURE,
BY D. H. GORDON, SPONSORED BY BHULABHAI MEMORIAL INSTITUTE. SOLE DISTRIBUTORS N. M. TRIPATHI (PRIVATE) LTD. BOMBAY, 1958. PP. 199. PLATES XXXII AND FIGURES 25.

The present book is a welcome addition to the meagre literature on Indian archaeology. It fulfils a long-felt need of the student as well as the layman. Indian archaeology has marched a long distance since the publication of Stuart Piggott's *Prehistoric India*. The last decade has been one of active research and a mass of new evidence has been brought to light. The need of a book that may bring home to the general reader an up-to-date coherent picture of the development of the various prehistoric cultures of India without burdening him with the technical jargon one associates with the excavation reports, has been felt by many, and Gordon's book admirably meets it. The book is not only aptly timed, it comes from the pen of one who has had a long and intimate association with Indian Archaeology. Colonel Gordon has not only kept abreast of the researches of other scholars in the field but has himself contributed a good deal, both during the years when he served in this country and since his retirement after which archaeology has been his main occupation.

The book is divided into eight chapters of which the first two deal with stone age industries. In the third chapter, the author has made a competent survey of the pottery cultures of the Indo-Iranian border and shown their correlation with the first appearance of the potters in Makran, Baluchistan and Sind. Appropriately enough, a whole chapter has been devoted to the Indus Valley civilization. In the fifth chapter, the author has shown what was happening in the countries on the western border of India when the Indus Civilization was flourishing in Sind and Punjab and what role these happenings played in the final decay and downfall of this civilization. He has not only collected the scattered and neglected evidence of the rock paintings and engravings from various parts of India but put an order into the chaos by a patient analysis of the various phases and putting them in a chronological frame-work. We hope this will pave the way for and stimulate further work on the problem. The final two chapters are the most important for it is there that the most important section of Indian archaeological research is summarised. Here the author discusses in some detail the various chalcolithic cultures that recent excavations have brought to light, their interrelationships and chronologies and the problems of enigmatic copper hoards, grey-ware, black and red

ware, megaliths, and the appearance of iron, and finally leaves the reader where he can draw upon history proper to know the rest of the story.

A few comments may here be made by way of suggestions. Although the title of the book bears the term "Prehistoric", the really prehistoric portion of the book, i.e. the stone ages, has been only cursorily treated. The distribution of the flake, blade and scraper industries which, there is sufficient evidence now, ubiquitously succeeded the earlier hand-axe—cleaver industries, has been inadequately reported. We hope that when the book goes into the second edition, this portion of the book will be treated in greater detail and a scientific terminology employed to designate the various industries. The author's deviation from the traditional use of the term *culture* is likely to disturb many who come across it. If his criterion in doing so is that any recurring tool assemblage to be labelled a culture should give an idea of the mode of life of its authors, then the Indian tool assemblages, or for that matter, any tool assemblages anywhere do give such an idea, somewhat vague and indistinct though it may be. One, however, fails to understand the author's emphasis on the presence of art as a criterion of culture. In fact, we know practically nothing about the language (certainly a more important aspect of culture than art!) of Megalithic or Indus Valley folks, but probably even the author would not object to the material remains of these people being labelled cultures. The difference between the Stone Age industries and later ones is only in the relative completeness of the picture and therefore, we feel, we are justified in speaking of a Sohan or a Madras culture.

The book does more than summing up the evidence even where the treatment of old material is concerned. It is replete with the author's suggestions and comments. A bold attempt has been made to identify the Ravi folk with the Aryans and the Megalithic folk with the Dravidians. Much in these and many other points are controversial because other scholars have alternative solutions to the same problems, yet, they do help bring the problems nearer solution. Unfortunately one gets the impression at places that there is a tendency to push down the dates. The publication of C 14 dates for Navadatoli already disproves the author's dates for that site and cannot but have some bearing on evidence from other sites.

At any rate, the present book will certainly be of great value to the specialist as well as to the layman. It is neatly printed and profusely illustrated with drawings, charts, maps and plates. One only wishes that the bibliography could be made more representative.

V. N. MISRA

RACES AND THE PEOPLE BY WILLIAM C. BOYD AND ISSAC ASIMOV. LONDON AND NEW YORK (ABELARD-SCHMAN) 1958, PP. 189.

It is high time for the anthropologists and other scientists to induce a new awareness in the minds of the people to put an end to the racial tension and endemic violence, which is a disgraceful problem yet to be tackled in different parts of the world. Here in this book the author attempts to popularise the scientific concept of race, and to avoid the unpleasant and distressing connotations frequently attached to it. The book can be easily recommended to the laymen including the undergraduate students of anthropology. The treatment given to the first two chapters of the book "The Mystic Word Race", and "What races are not", will certainly convince the readers that social and political views, differences in cultural outlook, and bodily appearance are the main factors responsible for the misuse of the word "Race".

Race as a zoological unit must be understood in its true perspective, and for that reason one is expected to have prior knowledge of the basic principles of genetics. The authors have done justice in acquainting the readers with the elementary knowledge of genetics which ultimately explains the mode of inheritance of those traits that are employed in differentiating the varieties of mankind. As is expected of William C. Boyd, one of the pioneers in anthropological serology, the chapters on blood groups are among the most interesting in the book and certainly have received considerable attention of the authors. What is surprising in this easy reading book, is that the authors have overlooked to clarify on pages 156-157, as to how the erythrocytes of the newborn are destroyed when the mother is Rh-negative and the baby is Rh-positive. A lay reader is bound to be puzzled if the case is otherwise. It would have been better had the mechanism of this drastic effect on the health of the baby been made more explicit.

The book is well written, and well got-up, interesting and sweetly brief.

R. P. SRIVASTAVA

HEALTH, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY—CASE STUDIES OF PUBLIC REACTIONS TO HEALTH PROGRAMMES, EDITED BY BENJAMIN D. PAUL WITH THE COLLABORATION OF WALTER B. MILLER. RUSSEL SAGE FOUNDATION, NEW YORK. PP. viii +493. (1955).

The book under review is a collection of sixteen case studies from different cultures and countries grouped into the following six sections: Reeducating the Community, Reaction to Crisis, Sex Pattern and

Population Problems, Effects of Social Segmentation, Vehicles of Administration, and Combining Service and Research. Edited by a social scientist attached to the Harvard School of Public Health, for imparting social orientation to medical personnel, the book is mainly concerned 'with the immediate situation where medicine and' community meet', and not with social antecedents of health conditions or long range social consequences of medical treatment. In general, social scientists by their 'Stereoscopic vision'—viewing social environment and cultural milieu at one and the same time, try, in all of these case studies, to view the particular situation created in different types or hours of health crises and cultural setting. All of the social scientists whose contributions have been incorporated in this book have either actively collaborated with health personnel or made participant or independent observation of the various situations, and understand and interpret them for the benefit of health workers' to canalise their aims and aspirations.

The case studies are classified under different headings, making the situations comparable and coherent. Furthermore, introductory and comparative remarks by the editor at the beginning of each case study enhance the value of the book and stimulate further comparisons. The case studies from South African Sulus, Canada, Peruvian Town Rajasthan, China, Thai, Puerto Rico, Pacific Island (Yap), Northern India (U.P.), Albama, Boston Suburb, Chile, Brazil, Colorado, Mexico, and Gautemala provide the reader with widely different cultural premises to view the hypothesis that effective implementation of health programs or for that matter any developmental activity, can be amply facilitated by looking through the cultural glasses of the people. "A knowledge of the community and its people . . . is just as important for successful public health work as is a knowledge of epe demology or medicine". (George Rosen, quoted on page 3). If culture is "What society does and thinks", and if one of its important functions is to supply us with tips or cues that enable us "in any social situation where we are interacting with other people, to understand and anticipate the behaviour of other individuals, and in turn to know how to behave ourselves", any one intending to bring about changes in a community from within (and not imposed) cannot do without understanding its cultural climate.

The problems discussed and the conclusions arrived at by the contributors to this volume are varied and interesting. One of the papers discusses the problems of reforming the human diet, another to convince housewives of the necessity of boiling their drinking water. All these carry the same lesson, viz., that the outwardly irrational belief and behaviour become intelligible and meaningful when viewed from within the community. In another section have been given three case studies concerning the two-way doctor patient relationship,

one in a Rajasthan village, another in a Chinese town, and the third in a Thai community. These point to the sliding scale of resistance to change and to the problem of differential acceptance and resistance even in the hours of crises ; again the causes are rooted in the particular culture and its values. The difference in basic attitudes, inspite of other facilities available, leads one to fall back upon one's own cultural equipment in the hours of crises, whether the equipment be scientific, pseudo-scientific or supernatural.

How demographic problems sometimes precariously hinge on culturally conditioned beliefs and practices regarding sex and reproduction, abortions and depopulation, has been shown in another section. The role of social segmentation in health programs has been demonstrated in three papers which refer to three widely different settings : a village in Uttar Pradesh, a community in Alabama and a Boston suburb.

It is a book with applied orientation, in some ways a follow up of Spicer's but the only one of its kind in the field of Social Science and Health. Well knit, rich in variety and content and well got up, it is indispensable for health workers and a valuable book for applied anthropologists.

R. S. KHARE

A PROFILE OF PRIMITIVE CULTURE BY ELMAN R. SERVICE,
HARPER AND BROS., NEW YORK, 1958, PP. XIV+474, \$6.00.

This book is wrongly titled ; it should have been called *Profiles of Primitive Cultures*, since it gives ethnographic accounts of no less than sixteen 'primitive' groups belonging to different levels of cultural development, and four 'rural' communities, one each from the civilizations of Mexico, Morocco, China, and India. Anthropologists do not consider the the culture of a primitive tribe as a stage in the wider universal 'Primitive Culture' but rather as an independently developed pattern which has its own individual identity. Again, the adjective 'primitive' is hardly suitable for the ancient civilizations of India, China and Mexico. This, however, does not diminish the importance and value of the book, to all anthropologists in general, and graduate students of anthropology at the Indian universities in particular.

In recent years, so many field studies have been carried out by anthropologists in different parts of the world and so many ethnographic monographs published that it is difficult for a single individual to keep track of all or even most of them. Ethnographic literature, again, is not easily available, particularly the old and long out-of-print monographs. Such anthologies and condensed 'profiles' are the only

alternative under such circumstances. The present one has certainly done its job well and would definitely be of great use to anthropologists all the world over.

The selection of the cultures included in the book is quite sensible and reasonable and their classification is a novel feature which, we feel sure, will make the reader's job easier and convenient so far comparisons between different cultures are concerned. Cultures have been selected so as to provide 'a sample of the major types of non-Western cultures'. Four 'bands', eight 'tribes', four 'primitive status' and four 'modern folk societies' have been described. At the end of each chapter a fairly exhaustive bibliography for detailed study is appended.

Descriptions are based on authoritative field monographs in each case. They seem to have been faithfully rendered on the basis of the original works and the author has not indulged in controversies and appraisals.

All told, it is a pleasant and informative reading, well illustrated and elegantly published. A three page glossary of technical anthropological terms given at the end will certainly come handy to the students and the occasionally confused lay readers.

K.S.M.

KINGDOM OF LAOS—THE LAND OF THE MILLION ELEPHANTS AND OF THE WHITE PARASOL BY RENE DE HERVAL, FRANCE-ASIE, SAIGON (VIET-NAM), ENGLISH EDITION 1959. PP. 506 AND 26 PLATES.

Pretty little is known about life in the small countries of South East Asia, and this monograph on the Kingdom of Laos—formerly a part of French Indo-China—is one of the few works in English which provide authentic and comprehensive information on Laos and her people. The book is divided into thirteen sections which deal with the geography, history, arts, ethnography, religion, medicine, language and literature, annals of Lan Xang, folklore, education, economy, and external affairs in this little kingdom. Each section consists of contributions from one or more authors and their treatment of their respective topics bears the hallmark of competence and authority.

Laos is a small country but it is rich in its economic resources. The people are Buddhists and they belong to the Hinayana branch of Buddhism. Their contacts with India date back to the early years of the Christian era and their cultural life is still considerably influenced by Hindu and Buddhist religious tenets. The country lies within the military influence of the SEATO and still its professed foreign policy

is that of non-alignment with the big power blocs. Our interest in Laos is thus historical, cultural as well as political, and thus we welcome this timely publication.

The book is rich in factual detail and gives to the reader a panoramic view of the country and its people in all aspects of their life. It is correctly and neatly printed, attractively produced and illuminated with a large number of photographs and maps and sketches. One wonders, why an index was not given; it is certainly needed in a book of this bulk. The *France-Asie* deserve praise for sponsoring and publishing this monograph and we hope they will follow up with similar books on other countries of the region. The political focus on Laos, as it has developed to day, makes the book of topical interest.

K.S.M.

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